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24 August 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

With a keen interest in completing a fellowship in Australia, I recall reading about Perth Sports Surgery Fellowship off chance in 2017, which at the time being new, sounded too good to be true. I had an enthusiastic interview with Dr D'Alessandro on a Sunday afternoon and was offered a place later that week. I started the Fellowship in January 2020, after completing a year of Fellowship in Canada and just before the world was faced with the Covid-19 pandemic.

My fellowship started off with a blast and was true to every word in its description. With my main interest in Shoulder and Upper limb surgery, I was encouraged from the very start to tailor my theatre lists to my area of interest. This fellowship involved working with a number of supervisors and I was encouraged by all to ensure that cases on their list met my learning goals. As the workload also involved working in the public and private sectors, the private sessions included a mixture of sports related injuries in shoulders, hips, knees and ankles. These sessions offered a great opportunity for the *acute* assessment and surgical treatment of sometimes complex sports related pathology which is something I did not witness during my training in the UK nor on Fellowship in Canada. Assisting in private lists allows fellows to continue to learn techniques which are helpful when doing independent lists in public sector.

Despite a stop to routine elective surgery as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic for almost 6 weeks, during my 6 months on the fellowship, my logbook had 290 operations (240 electives: 50 trauma) of which I performed around 55% of cases. The split between shoulder/UL and knee/LL cases was almost 55:45. My independent or supervised shoulder case load included 10 stabilisations, 15 arthroscopic rotator cuff repairs (+/- SAD, BT tenotomy, ACJe), 5 capsular releases, 4 open Latarjet, 10 shoulder replacements. The knee case load included: 19 ACLR + 4 LET, 5 ligament repairs (PCL, MPFL & MCL), 17 meniscal/root repairs, 7 multiligament knee reconstructions (ACL +/- PLC, PMC, MCL).

For me this fellowship exceeded all expectations. The setup of this fellowship was such that it encouraged the fellows to start making independent decisions by having independent theatre lists and clinics with appropriate supervision from various Fellowship trained Consultant colleagues. Furthermore, what was great about this programme was the industry support in theatres on all occasions which was second to none. In all honesty, I do not recall having such excitement in doing cases while learning, teaching and innovating at the same time as I had with industry representatives on this fellowship.

The Perth Sports Surgery fellowship has provided me a perfect mix of cases with appropriate level of supervision as well as independence. Leaving this fellowship, I feel confident in taking up my Consultant post upon returning to the UK. I think, anyone considering or lucky enough to do the Perth Sports Surgery fellowship would feel the same upon completion. I am only left thinking what if there was no Covid19, but then again, I still did more operating than any of my counterparts in the UK and EU in the same time period, so I consider myself to be very lucky.

Kind regards

Shahbaz Malik
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