

RE: Leicester knee fellowship report for Dhawal Patel

I have been one of the Leicester knee fellows from August 2024 for the space of a year, the following is my report and reflections of my time in this role.

I was in a privileged position to have been offered a substantive consultant post in lower limb arthroplasty prior to commencing on this fellowship; so highly regarded was it's reputation that I requested my incoming hospital to move my start date to a year later such that I can partake the fellowship, as the skills and experience I pick up here will undoubtedly make me more valuable to my future unit and also improve the quality of care I deliver to patients. The flexibility of the fellowship team and consultants also allowed me to spend a year doing lower limb and knee arthroplasty to really focus on developing these skills to make my future practice easier.

In this year I have been involved in 296 cases with 222 being the first surgeon, nearly 50% of them in a position of being completely independent or training a junior member of the team. The vast majority of these will be elective cases also. I have performed 111 primary lower limb arthroplasty procedures (67 total knee replacements including complex primaries, 23 unicompartmental knee replacements and 21 total hip replacements) along with 22 revision knee replacements of which 4 were for complex infection cases. Prior to the start of this fellowship, I had not performed a single unicompartmental replacement, at the time of writing I have been able to do them independently and post-operatively patients have been doing well. It is a testament to the training and trust afforded to us on this fellowship that we can be trained in a quick and effective manner which then leads to independent operating in a short period of time. The decision making I have learnt and the confidence I have picked up in this fellowship will leave me in a good position in my future consultant career.

The teaching aspect of my portfolio is something I take pride in and while working in the unit I had the opportunity to help senior trainees with their FRCS examinations, both their written and OSCE sections. While I see this as a professional obligation, I was also grateful to be involved in the FRCS OSCE mocks ran by the deanery as well as delivering formal registrar teaching in the region. I will aim to become a clinical or educational supervisor in my future consultant role and the things I have picked up during this fellowship in terms of organising courses and delivering teaching will undoubtedly help that facet of my consultant practice.

The real importance of the fellowship however is something that has come from within. Despite the success of obtaining a consultant post, I still had internal doubts and fears over starting and my skills as an independent practitioner, as I suspect we all do. Being in a supportive environment yet one that pushes you to continue to better yourself such as the one in Leicester has led to me being more confident without being arrogant, having an even better insight into my abilities and means that when I begin my consultant practice, it will be with pride and bravery rather than fear. The Leicester knee unit was instrumental in making that change.

I have already recommended it to my peers and juniors, and they are excited to continue the legacy of the Leicester knee fellowship of which I will always be thankful to have been part of.

Kind regards,



Dhawal Patel (BSc (hons), MBChB, MSc, FRCS Tr & Orth)