

Leicester Knee Fellowship Report (August 2024 – January 2025)

To Whom It May Concern

It has been a privilege to undertake the Leicester Knee Fellowship over 6-months period from August 2024 to Feb 2025. The fellowship programme under the supervision of Mr. Aujla, Mr. Ghosh, and Mr. Godsiff offers comprehensive training in modern, evidence-based surgical techniques. All three supervisors are highly skilled surgeons, having trained under some of the world's leading knee surgeons. Their combined expertise ensures a well-rounded learning experience.

As my first fellowship, I was eager to broaden my experience in knee surgery, with a particular interest in both preservation and sports-related procedures. It provided invaluable exposure to a wide range of knee pathologies and surgical interventions, fostering both my clinical and surgical acumen. This experience not only enhanced my technical skills but also reinforced my ability to manage patients comprehensively, from initial evaluation to surgical decision-making and postoperative care.

The fellowship has been a truly transformative experience for several reasons. One of the most valuable aspects was the opportunity to work within three distinct practices, each offering unique clinical perspectives and surgical approaches. This exposure not only broadened my understanding of patient care but also helped me develop greater adaptability and versatility as a surgeon. The surgical experience was another key highlight. With a high hands-on opportunity, I was able to build confidence in performing a wide range of procedures. The high case volume played a crucial role in honing my technical skills and improving my efficiency in the operating room. Lastly, the diversity of cases was remarkable. My exposure to such diverse surgical techniques enabled me to refine my decision-making skills in selecting appropriate procedures tailored to individual patient needs.

Case Volume and Complex Surgical Exposure

The fellowship provides exposure to a good volume of cases, allowing fellows to refine their surgical skills through repetition. This volume not only aids in mastering standard procedures but also emphasizes the critical skill of troubleshooting complex surgical scenarios.

A significant proportion of cases involve multiple pathologies, offering invaluable experience in complex procedures. One notable case I participated in early on involved a quadriceps ACL reconstruction, LM root repair, meniscal allograft transplant (medial), and high tibial osteotomy (HTO) performed as one operation I had only encountered in academic literature before. Such exposure makes routine cases more manageable and straightforward by comparison. The meniscal transplant was very impressive to see, and I was very grateful that I could take an active role as surgeon in the procedures, picking up several useful tips that I am sure to incorporate in my practice going forward.

By the end of the fellowship, I had logged 172 procedures, with 87% as the primary surgeon/or performed completely independently. My personal highlights included exposure to multi-ligament knee reconstructions, revision ACLs, meniscal transplants, periarticular osteotomies, meniscal root repairs, cartilage restoration surgery, patellofemoral stabilisation and exposure to multiple graft choices. From a quick logbook review across the 6 months, I was involved with 4 multi-ligament knee reconstruction PCL's/PLC's/ACL's/MCL's (I performed 3 of them), 31 ACLs (I performed 26 of them), 5 periarticular osteotomy 3 HTO's/1 DFO/1 DeRO (I performed 4 of them), 23 meniscal repairs/root repairs (I did 21 of them), 28 TKRs (I did 20), 5 Uni Knees (I did 3), 15 quads, hamstring & synthetic MPFL reconstructions/7 tibial tuberosity transfer (I performed all of them) and ended up fixing 5 OCD's.

My exposure to such diverse surgical techniques enabled me to refine my decision-making skills in selecting appropriate procedures tailored to individual patient needs. I was trusted to operate independently, taking the lead in various surgeries, which significantly enhanced my confidence and technical proficiency.

Industry Support and Collaboration

The fellowship offers exceptional industry support. Representatives play an integral role in familiarising fellows with surgical kits and advanced techniques, both within and outside the operating theatre. Their knowledge-sharing greatly enhances the learning process.

Research Contributions

There are regular sports research meetings and there is encouragement to get involved in some of the high-level ongoing research projects. Academically I was able to be part of local long-term follow up cohort studies. These will hopefully lead to publications and presentations.

The Leicester Knee fellowship provided a comprehensive and well-rounded experience that has significantly advanced my surgical skills and clinical expertise. This experience has been a pivotal chapter in my career, and I will carry the lessons I have learned with me as I move forward. I am deeply grateful to the entire team for their mentorship, support, and commitment to excellence.

Kind regards,

Sabri Bleibleh
MBBS, MRCS, MSc (Dis), FRCS (Tr&Orth)