

ME Müller Fellowship Report 2024

The M.E. Müller Fellowship was an incredible experience from start to finish. I was accompanied by my wife and two young children (ages 3 and 1) for the duration of the fellowship, and it was an amazing experience for them as well.

My first destination was ENDO-Klinik in Hamburg with Profs Thorsten Gehrke and Mustafa Citak. At ENDO-Klinik, I spent most of my time scrubbing periprosthetic joint infection cases in the septic OR. I focused on complex revision hip and knee replacement during my time in Hamburg. I was drawn to the two-surgeon model for septic cases, having one surgeon perform the radial debridement with the second performing the reconstruction. This was done to ensure that the debridement was thorough without sacrificing quality debridement for an easier reconstruction. I also learned about the cost-conscious approach to picking implants at one of the largest revision centers in Europe. In our free time, my family and I trekked through Hamburg on foot. We visited the Hamburg Zoo and explored many playgrounds in our local neighborhood of Eimsbüttel. Overall, the experience at ENDO-Klinik opened my eyes to the tumor-style debridement technique which I intend to incorporate in my practice.

Our next destination was University College London with Prof. Fares Haddad. Prof. Haddad was the consummate host and afforded me the opportunity to scrub with many of the surgeons at UCL including Dr. Oussedik. Prof. Haddad was gracious enough to invite me to his annual London Knee Meeting including the faculty dinner afterward, where I was able to meet with knee surgeons throughout Europe and the United States. Clinically, I focused on Prof. Haddad's robotic knee and hip workflows and did manage to see a few complex primary and revision surgeries while I was in London. In addition to my clinical duties, I helped review some papers for the *Bone and Joint Journal* and had multiple opportunities to talk with Prof. Haddad about how to balance clinical responsibility and research/academic tasks as an arthroplasty surgeon. Prof. Haddad has three fellows and many other trainees, and I was fortunate to become close with many of them, with whom I still keep in touch. In our free time, my family and I enjoyed exploring the many different neighborhoods in London. We met up with some old friends who now live in London.

After London, we made our way back to continental Europe to visit the Schulthess Klinik in Zurich. There, I worked closely with Profs. Michael Leunig and Hannes Rudiger. My clinical focus at Schulthess was primary, complex primary, and revision anterior hip replacement. I was able to study the subtleties of their technique including the bikini incision, off-table setup and exposure, and avoiding fluoro. I started a collaborative study between Schulthess Klinik and my future institution (Fondren Orthopedic Group in Houston, TX) evaluating early revision through a direct anterior approach. This study is ongoing. As in London, I was able to work with many residents and chief residents/junior attendings in Zurich. I met with them and their families outside the hospital and still keep in touch with them. Zurich was a lovely city for our family. We lived close to Lake Zurich and frequently took walks along the lakes in the evening. We also were able to visit my godmother in Basel and take a daytrip to Lucerne.

My last destination was Italy, where I worked with Dr. Andrea Baldini. Dr. Baldini operates and sees patients in Florence and Rome, so I traveled with him to see both practice setups. He is an extremely busy knee and hip surgeon with multiple residents, who I befriended during my stay. In Rome, I was impressed to see how he ran three ORs simultaneously with help from multiple community surgeons and residents. Getting to work with Dr. Baldini was an absolute pleasure. I learned much about his approach to revision knee replacement, zonal fixation, unicompartamental knee arthroplasty, and managing research tasks as a clinically busy surgeon.

Overall, the M.E. Müller Fellowship opened my eyes to different healthcare models, training structures, and approaches to managing problems within total joint replacement. I came away from the Fellowship with good friends and connections throughout Europe. I am so grateful to the M.E. Müller Foundation for this experience of a lifetime, which I will carry with me into my new clinical practice and research in Houston.

Drake LeBrun