

Report on visiting Birmingham children's hospital

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I am working for Showa University Northern Yokohama Hospital as a pediatric cardiologist. Most of my interests have focused on catheter intervention. I visited the Birmingham Children's Hospital for eight weeks (from 11th of January to 3rd of March, 2016) as a candidate of the young investigator exchange program between AEPC and JSPCCS.

Birmingham Children's Hospital is one of the largest centers of pediatric cardiology and they are very active in treatment of congenital heart diseases. I saw a lot of complicated cases such as hypoplastic left heart syndrome, heterotaxy syndrome and pulmonary atresia with major aortopulmonary collateral arteries. I stayed there as an observer in the cardiovascular unit and experienced many catheter interventions and cardiac open heart surgeries.

They start with ICU ward round at 8 AM every morning. They also hold a joint cardiac conference with pediatric cardiovascular surgery team twice a week. There are many additional lectures for young doctors with senior consultant cardiologists and surgeons about echocardiography, surgical technique and catheter intervention. They are all very attractive for me. One day I experienced the morphology teaching session on Tetralogy of Fallot presented by Professor RH Anderson on heart specimens.

I observed 3-4 cases of catheter intervention every day in the cath lab. Every staff in the hospital offered very good hospitality and enthusiastically guided me. Sometimes they teach the detailed technique of catheter intervention with hands-on support. Therefore I was able to have a wonderful time and get many useful experiences there and I got many new ideas and knowledge which I can use back home.

I also visit the Great Ormond Hospital in London in mid February following recommendation of Dr. Olivet Stumper's. I attended the joint cardiac conference and observed some catheter intervention cases there. They had some different approach for management of congenital heart disease from Birmingham. That also very informative for me as well.

I got a great opportunity to make a case presentation at the Congenital Heart Intervention Group (CHIG) meeting in 28th and 29th January during my stay in Birmingham. Unlike many Japanese conferences, this meeting was all about discussing cases with complications and they also discussed their own experiences in honesty. I was very impressed by the setup and style of this meeting.

I had a wonderful time with the staff at the hospital. I really appreciated this fantastic opportunity.



My Experience in Hôpital Necker Enfants Malades

Nagano Children's Hospital Department of Pediatric Cardiology Manabu Nitta

I had an excellent time in Hôpital Necker Enfants Malades (Necker hospital). I stayed for six weeks there. Originally, I'm not a pediatrician, but an adult cardiologist. To be an expert of adult congenital heart disease (ACHD), I was training at Nagano Children's Hospital (NCH). At the end of three-year training in NCH, fortunately, I got a chance to go to Paris as a member of the fellowship exchange program between AEPC and JSPCCS in 2016.

The most impressive thing was that I could see a lot of kinds and a number of patients in such a short period. Especially, I spent a lot of time to see cardiac surgery and cardiac catheterization. In Japan, most cardiologists (both pediatric and adult) are very busy in daily work, so they don't have enough time to see a lot of cardiac surgery. Therefore this exchange program was a good opportunity to see many operations. They perform three or four cardiac surgery every weekday, much more than NCH. In regard to cardiac catheterization, percutaneous pulmonary valve implantation and percutaneous Potts shunts are performed, which are not yet available in Japan. These procedures were very exciting, and the interventional doctors in Necker hospital were very familiar with those. I believe that in the future these experiences would be useful when we start new interventions.

In addition, professor BONNET managed me to go to Hôpital Européen Georges-Pompidou once a week to learn ACHD treatment, which is twenty minutes away from Necker hospital by Metro. I talked a lot about ACHD with specialists there. That was also useful for me.

Before I left for Japan, I was so nervous about two points. One was French speaking because I couldn't speak and listen to French at all. But all the medical staff was very kind to me, and they tried to translate French to English for me to understand well. When I met some staff in the hall, they always talked to me, "Ça vas, Manabu? (Are you fine?)" or "Is everything doing well? Therefore I made friends with many French doctors.

Twice I was invited to their home party, had a nice fancy dinner, and had a wonderful time with them. Another thing I was concerned was the public safety. As you know, they had a horrible terrorism in November 2015. I saw a lot of police and armies with weapons all over the city. Because of that, I had no trouble when I stayed in Paris.

During my stay in Paris, I also enjoyed sightseeing. I visited many famous spots. When I talked about my sightseeing experience with local Parisien and Parisienne, they said that I already visited almost whole Paris, and could enjoy Paris enough!

The stay in Paris was quite meaningful for me. My last words at the staff meeting just before leaving Paris were as follows, “ I love Paris, I love Necker, and I love you . . . I’ll never forget your kindness.”

Finally I really thank AEPC, JSPCCS, all the staff of Necker hospital, my colleagues in NCH, and my family to give me such an excellent time. I hope I’ll visit Hôpital Necker Enfants Malades and talk with my French friends someday.

Merci beaucoup ! A la prochaine fois. Bonne chance!



With Pr. Damien BONNET at the party



With the colleagues at the famous restaurant in Montparnasse



With Dr. Gitti MILANI in the cathe-lab

My short stay in Padova

Takahisa Sakurai, MD.

Chukyo Children' s Heart Center, Nagoya, Japan

It was a great four weeks for me to spend time with pediatric surgical team in Padova University Hospital. The chief of the department, Professor Giovanni Stellin, is very famous for annular preserved Fallot repair and Minimally invasive pediatric cardiac surgery. Unfortunately, I did not have chance to see Fallot repair, however I could see many minimally invasive procedures. Minimally invasive procedure was already a routine procedure in Padova. Until I see this procedure by myself, I could not believe that partial AVSD or subaortic resection had been undergone with small 4-5 cm lateral incision. Neck or peripheral cannulation were simply done as a daily procedure. This has changed my mind about minimally invasive procedure.

Case conference was very interesting to join. Although I could not understand the content of the discussion completely, due to language barrier, once the heated debated started, it sometime took about one hour to finish even only one patient. This was a culture shock for me.

The last week of my stay, I spent in cardiac morphology department, under the super vision of Professor Angelini. This department has long history and huge collections of cardiac morphology. Unfortunately, I did not have time to see all the morphology collections, but I did have chance to see some of interesting heart collections.

Life in Italy was also fantastic, Padova has famous churches and very close to Venice. Of course, I also enjoyed fabulous Italian food.

Because of Paris terror, I was little afraid to visit Europe, but Padova was very safe, and quiet beautiful city. One thing I really regret was that I did not have much time to study Italian language. If I could speak Italian, I could make my stay more fruitful. Of course, although I could not speak Italy, people in the hospital were very nice.

Finally, I do really appreciate to have such a wonderful opportunity staying in Padova. The member and executives of AEPC/JSPCCAS, Prof. Stellin, Dr Padallino, Prof. Angelini and Prof. Milanese. Also I wish to acknowledge all the staff in Chukyo Hospital to fill my vacancy.

