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My experience in Birmingham Children's Hospital

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I visited Birmingham Children's Hospital in the UK for two months as a member of the AEPC-YIEP fellowship. It became one of the most exciting and valuable experiences in my life. I would like to pay great regard to everyone involved.

Actually, my fellowship was approved at the end of 2019. I was so happy when I heard it from JSPCCS. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had begun just after that and kept me away from my fellowship. I felt desperation every time the virus surged, but finally, my long-awaited wish came true more than 2 years after that. I appreciate Dr. Oliver Stumper, Dr. Chetan Mehta, Dr. Hiroyuki Yamagishi, and Dr. Hirofumi Saiki for accepting the postponing.

Everyone in Birmingham children's hospital was very friendly and kind. All medical staff in the Cath lab was professional and knew the patient's disease and situation well. I was impressed that they have a lot of communication and respect each other. In weekly case conferences and M&Ms, I realized that there are not only similarities but also differences in the disease and the strategy for severe cases between the UK and Japan.

I learned a lot from Dr. Chetan Mehta. I could see his many interventions for patients with various congenital heart diseases. His maneuver just went by so quickly and precisely with refined decisions. He took me the time of special lecture of RVOT stenting for the infantile TOF, which was the intervention I wanted to learn the most. He gave me tips and tricks and how to troubleshoot in the procedure. He also took me to Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, where he showed me the interventions for adult congenital heart disease including transpulmonary valve implantation. After returning to Japan, I would like to perform those to contribute to patients' life, keeping in touch with Chetan.

In the autumn of 2022, I could fortunately spend time without much restriction due to COVID-19 in contrast to Japan. I could take off my mask and feel the breeze of Birmingham. Aston Villa became my favorite football club team.

As for accommodation, I stayed in a flat shared with Romanian, Italian and French. Birmingham is a multicultural city, with people from many different countries, and I was able to experience many different cultures. I never thought I could enjoy playing tennis with Egyptian friends. Thanks to my friend Ahmed.

I am once again grateful to Chetan and his cardiology staff at Birmingham children's hospital. I am thankful to AEPC and JSPCCS for giving me such a wonderful opportunity as well. All my experiences in Birmingham will be of great help to me in my future career and life.

In the end, I hope that the day will come soon when more young Japanese clinicians and investigators can go abroad without any concerns about virus or war.

