

University of Toronto Breast Cancer Reconstruction Fellowship Report

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

My year as a clinical fellow at the University of Toronto Breast Cancer Reconstruction Fellowship was truly an excellent experience. During this time I had the privilege of working with leaders in the world of breast reconstruction. This is the ideal fellowship for those looking for well-rounded and comprehensive training in breast reconstruction surgery.

I spent the first six months of the fellowship at Women's College Hospital working with Dr. John Semple and Dr. Mitchell Brown. This is an ambulatory hospital where elective day and overnight stay surgeries are performed. The majority of my experience at this site was with implant-based reconstructions, including a large number of nipple sparing mastectomies with immediate direct-to-implant reconstruction. I also had significant exposure to the use of acellular dermal matrix and lipofilling as adjuncts to breast reconstruction. Additionally, I participated in pedicled latissimus dorsi and TRAM flap reconstructions during this rotation and witnessed the expeditious and very successful discharge of patients the next morning after these surgeries.

I gained additional experience in aesthetic surgery at The Cumberland Clinic with Dr. Brown. Both the fellow and senior resident operate with him there one to two days each week. Procedures at this private OR include breast augmentation, mastopexy, mastopexy augmentation, breast reduction, tuberous breast reconstruction, revision breast surgery, abdominoplasty, liposuction, and facial aesthetic surgery. I found these days to be very beneficial in strengthening my overall approach to aesthetics in breast surgery. As a bonus, the working relationship with the staff at the clinic is very pleasant.

The second six months from January to June were spent at Toronto General Hospital, Mount Sinai and Princess Margaret Hospital with Dr. Toni Zhong, Dr. Stephan Hofer and Dr. Anne O'Neill. The clinical volume during this rotation was higher in comparison and extremely valuable. This was the ideal balance to the first six months. It was here that I gained experience and skill in autologous reconstruction of the breast, namely through DIEP and MS-TRAM free flaps. I participated in one to two free flaps each week, working alongside the staff and typically one other fellow or senior resident. I also performed significantly more latissimus flap and tissue expander reconstructions at these sites. It was very useful working with each individual staff, as they each imparted unique pearls and variations for the different types of reconstruction.

I also had the privilege of attending several conferences during the fellowship, including Plastic Surgery The Meeting (ASPS), the Atlanta Breast Surgery Symposium, the Toronto Breast Surgery Symposium, and the Canadian Society of Plastic Surgery Meeting. I made valuable connections with other breast reconstruction surgeons at these meetings and further enhanced my knowledge base. Additionally, I was invited to participate on an overseas surgical mission trip to Bangladesh with Dr. Zhong through the

organization Women for Women in February 2016. This trip was certainly an incredible experience and a highlight of the year.

Overall, I can say that I grew as a surgeon in both skill and knowledge during my fellowship training. I was exposed to multiple approaches to breast reconstruction and was able to train with staff surgeons who are highly committed to teaching, research, and an evidence based approach to care. I am very grateful for the opportunity that I had to work with each one of them. They taught me how to manage the complexities and challenges inherent in breast reconstruction. I also want to thank Allergan for their continued sponsorship of this excellent fellowship.