



ACG INTERNATIONAL TRAINING GRANT TO MAYO CLINIC ROCHESTER

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GASTROENTEROLOGY HAS BEEN SEEING DYNAMIC CHANGES with a paradigm shift in the management of many conditions especially through endoscopy. The critical need for advanced endoscopies has been increasing. One of the hurdles that is faced is the learning curve and the infrastructure necessary to set up an advanced endoscopy unit.

Procedures for common problems have seen an increasing trend such as Endoscopic Balloon Dilation, Mucosal Resection, Transluminal Drainage of Pseudocysts and Per Oral Endoscopic Myotomy (POEM). With the diversity in culture and food habits in the Tropical Subcontinent, there is bound to be an increasing need to attend to many gastroenterological conditions and advanced endoscopy is definitely a step forward for the same. The patients are often required to go to specialised hospitals which are far too few. Again, they are not easily affordable unlike in developed countries where people have complete insurance coverage and can easily afford specialised treatment. This need prompted me to get trained in such areas with the prestigious Mayo Clinic at Rochester. When I received the ACG International Training opportunity with Mayo Clinic, I was only overwhelmed that my interest in training and observership

in such a hospital in advanced scopes under senior specialists along with clinical work would go a long way.

It was indeed a pleasure in working along with the senior professionals specialised in such advanced procedures. Right from my day of arrival, I was enamoured by the history and rich culture of this institution, which was provided as part of a two-day induction tour programme. The chief mentor and host was Dr. Prasad Iyer. Dr. Iyer is an authority in disorders of the esophagus with a special interest in Barrett's esophagus and various endoscopic treatment modalities. He is also trained in endoscopic ultrasound as well as advanced endoscopic procedures. Hence, he guided me perfectly with a good balance of these procedures. As part of my keen interest in third space endoscopy, I was introduced to Dr. L. M. Wong Kee Song who performs all the advanced third space procedures including POEM and Gastric POEM, endoscopic submucosal dissection and endoscopic mucosal resections, and full thickness resections. I was even allowed to be a part of the ongoing research in full thickness resection.

I also had the privilege of being introduced to Dr. Barham Abu Dayyeh

and Dr. Andrew Storm who perform most of the advanced bariatric procedures once a week in turns and learned a lot from them. Dr. Andrew Storm, along with Dr. Iyer, introduced me to the animal lab facility at Mayo where I was taught endoscopic suturing techniques for bariatric and troubleshooting purposes. I was also introduced to Dr. Elizabeth Rajan and Dr. Ferga Gleeson who perform and teach endoscopic ultrasounds. This provided a step wise learning of the station approach in endo ultrasound.

I also had the opportunity to interact and learn from some stalwarts like Dr. Bret Petersen who is a master in ERCP and was kind enough to demonstrate and teach me short exchange of the guidewire in ERCP as well as narrow band image guided papilla access. I also spent time with the legendary late Dr. Michael Levy again an expert in ERCP and master of endoscopic ultrasound. He taught and demonstrated advanced endoscopic ultrasound-guided procedures.

Dr. Iyer also introduced me to Dr.



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Nayanthara Coelho-Prabhu (advanced endoscopist and IBD expert), Dr. Ryan Law, and Dr. Vinay Chandrasekhara (advanced endoscopists – EUS and ERCP). I was also introduced to Dr. Navtej Buttar who is an expert in the endoscopic management of leaks and fistulas. He taught well through a wide exposure to complicated cases.

During this tenure, I was fortunate to attend daily sessions of outpatient clinics as well. I was allowed to observe minute procedural nitty-gritties and take some notes accordingly of many of the ongoing endoscopies and reporting techniques. I visited the patients pre- and post-procedures being effectively managed along with the co-medicos nursing team. Special thanks to the entire nursing team and endoscopic technical team, especially Laura and Kristen.

Apart from this, I had an opportunity to interact with the fellows in advanced endoscopy as well as hepatology. I also was allowed to participate in the IBD clinic and grand

rounds which took place periodically. I am very grateful to the team of doctors mentioned above and a special thanks to all of them with whom I interacted so very well, and they were always kind enough to carry me through with any sort of queries which were clarified to the end point of closure. It was really a pleasant learning experience and a great way to experience the observership with a hands-on feel.

I will always be thankful and much obliged for the excellent mentorship, willingness to go out of the way towards clarifications, and commitment which is par excellence. I will cherish this learning experience from these veterans who were guiding at every stage throughout the tenure. I am fairly confident that this will keep me in good stead and positively shape my future, and I wish to continue to stay in touch with them for future collaborations as well.

Special thanks are vastly due to Dr. K. R. Palaniswamy who has been a mentor in every aspect right from the time of concept of the idea and to get this golden opportunity for me. I would also like to

thank Dr. Bharath Somasundaram who guided me all along and was instrumental in driving me to train abroad and my family who were very supportive and encouraging throughout. Lastly, I am grateful to be part of an institution which has supported me all along and keeps motivating me to do better for myself and for the patients – our charismatic and encouraging Chairman Dr. Prathap C. Reddy as well as Vice Chairperson Mrs. Preetha Reddy have been encouraging throughout and Dr. Venkatasalam, the Director of Medical Services at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, who has been a pillar of support for me throughout this process.

Clockwise from upper left: Dr. Natarajan with Nayanthara Coelho-Prabhu, MD, FACG; with Prasad G. Iyer, MD, FACG; with Louis M. Wong Kee Song, MD; again with Dr. Iyer, ACG Governor for Minnesota with Navtej S. Buttar, MD.

