

IUGA observer: Suneetha Rachaneni

Duration: 6/1/14-7/2/14

I had the privilege and the opportunity to visit the Nepean Clinical School as an IUGA observer in January 2014. The Pelvic floor unit headed by Prof Peter Dietz provides excellent opportunities for visitors from around the world to improve their understanding of 3D and 4D scanning of the pelvic floor anatomy. The paperwork, though extensive, was worth pursuing before I was cleared to step into clinical areas at the Nepean Hospital.

I attended several urogynaecology clinics and urodynamic sessions. I was allowed to observe history taking, clinical examination and 3D/4D transperineal ultrasound. Although observers are not allowed to perform USS under supervision in state owned hospitals, I had the opportunity to perform a few pelvic floor scans in the private setting with the patient's consent. Towards the end of each clinical session, Prof Dietz discussed all the interesting cases and explained the pathology of pelvic floor dysfunction with the help of 3D and 4D images. Pelvic floor scanning of prolapse, levator muscle, tomographic scanning of anal sphincter has helped me gain new understanding of pelvic floor function.

Theatre sessions were scheduled twice every month. It was rather unfortunate that I could not observe a Puborectalis sling insertion procedure. This is an ongoing RCT designed to reduce the reduction in recurrence of prolapse by reducing the hiatal area through insertion of a mesh to support the puborectalis muscle. When these women attended the follow up clinics, I could visualise the change in their anatomy compared to their scans prior to the procedure.

The unit has a large database of stored images of pelvic floor scans. Observers to the unit have opportunities to work on small retrospective research projects on stored images. I have worked on a retrospective study on the role of digital rectal examination in identifying rectovaginal septal defects. Under the expert supervision of Prof Dietz, I have submitted the abstract to the IUGA scientific meeting 2014 due to be held in Washington and it has been accepted for a poster presentation. I am currently writing the manuscript for journal publication.

During my free time, I enjoyed sightseeing the beautiful city of Sydney. I visited various iconic places like the Opera House, Harbour Bridge, Taronga Zoo, and Sydney Tower. Penrith, where Nepean hospital is based, is very close to the picturesque and scenic Blue Mountains. Being a nature lover, I spent a couple of my weekends bush walking in the Blue Mountains.

The research fellows in the unit seem to be very accommodating. I can reassure that visitors to the unit will gain valuable insight into the use of ultrasound to study pelvic floor anatomy and function which may be the future of urogynaecology. I sincerely thank IUGA for providing me the financial help in the form of observer grant to fund my visit to the Nepean Hospital.