

Colombo, Sri Lanka – Occupational Therapy Report by Catherine Miller (Great Ormond St Hospital)



It was an honour to be asked once again to join the multidisciplinary team travelling to Sri Lanka earlier this month to undertake hand surgery and hand therapy teaching. I travelled with a team led by Mr Branavan Sivakumar, Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon at Great Ormond Street Hospital. We returned to the Plastic Surgery team at Lady Ridgeway Hospital in Colombo, hosted by Mr Romesh Gunasekera.

The model was very similar to last year's visit. We attended a multidisciplinary clinic assessing approximately 50 patients with congenital hand anomalies ranging from camptodactyly and thumb duplications to radial ray dysplasia (RRD). From this clinic, children identified as needing surgery were listed for theatre and children identified as needing more conservative treatment were asked to return for therapy. The following two days were dedicated to treating children in the Occupational Therapy suite with local therapists. These days served as workshops, where I led the teaching on stretching and splinting techniques and other therapeutic strategies. I supplemented this workshop with a presentation on Thumb Hypoplasia and Pollicisation. To finish the week, I gave a presentation to the wider medical team on Pollicisation Protocol and Outcomes.

Not only was it a great pleasure to build on the relationships made with my international colleagues one year ago, this follow up visit was hugely successful as I was able to recognise the impact of my visit last year. I observed improved splinting skills by local therapists who were able to apply and review splinting regimes according to my instruction last year. For one child with RRD, after a year of stretching and splinting to prepare his soft tissue, this meant he was ready for a surgical procedure (radialisation) by our team this year.



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