

Fellowship Report for Dowling Club Overseas Trip to Nepal 2019

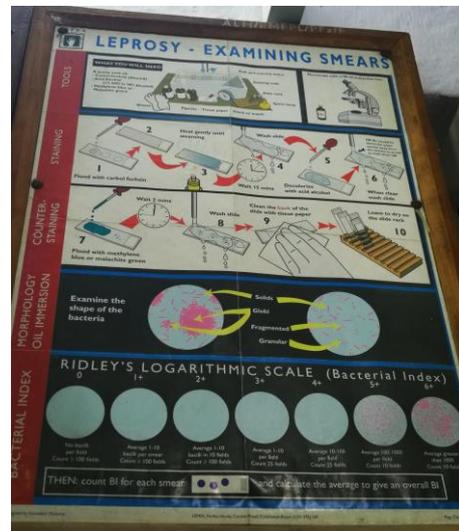
by Dr Conor Broderick

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the BAD and the Dowling Club for granting me a travelling fellowship for the Dowling Club trip to Nepal in April 2019.

Our first and second days in Kathmandu were filled with excellent talks at the SODVELONCON, the annual conference run by the Society of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists of Nepal. This meeting is very reminiscent of our BAD annual meeting, with a mixture of clinical and research presentations by both eminent experts and trainees. I thoroughly enjoyed lectures from visiting consultants on the role of the microbiome in skin health and disease and the overview of various psychodermatology conditions. The UK Consultants' talks complimented the excellent lectures from the Nepalese specialists, notably on the management of leprosy in the post-elimination era, their approach to vitiligo and platelet-rich fibrin treatment for neuropathic leprosy ulcers, a treatment modality I had never encountered before. Trainee case presentations focused on infectious diseases, contrasting the UK and Nepalese clinical experiences.

In Kathmandu we were treated to a wonderful musical showcase and visited some beautiful ancient temples and monuments. A special mention must go to resident photographer and local hero, Dr Puran Gurung who gave us local insights and kept us on the straight and narrow throughout the trip.

Undoubtedly one of my main motivations for attending the Dowling Club trip to Nepal was to learn about tropical dermatology. Leprosy care is provided free-of-charge, in contrast to the rest of the health service. The team at the Anadaban Leprosy Hospital have developed an entrepreneurial streak and generate additional funding by providing adjunctive medical services to the local population (which are paid for by patients). Treating leprosy involves prolonged in-patient stays, expensive medications and reconstructive surgery for deformities. In addition to this, the humble and dedicated team carry out international-level research on leprosy. The Staff we met showed such passion and perseverance in the face of adversity and provide an astonishing service to a very vulnerable patient cohort.



Our journey to the luscious lakeside town of Pokhara was a welcome reprieve after the overcrowded, dusty streets of the capital. Nestled alongside lake Phewa, amongst the beautiful Annapurna Mountains, Pokhara is a one for the bucket list. I thoroughly enjoyed the elusive mountain views at sunrise and even snuck in some paragliding in the free time we had here. I will most certainly be coming back to attempt some of the multi-day treks over the Himalayan ridges.

In Pokhara, we attended Green Pastures for a tour of their hospital which provides secondary care to the wider community, as well as being a tertiary centre for leprosy care. Here we met patients affected by leprosy and were greeted with the famous Nepalese smile and openness at every turn. The clinical signs of leprosy were fascinating, including palpable peripheral nerves, deformities caused by auto-amputations and nerve palsies and clofazimine-induced hyperpigmentation. We returned the following day for an exciting clinical meeting where we were treated to a tour-de-force on genetic poikilodermatous conditions by Prof Celia Moss when two paediatric cases attended, one child with Rothmund-Thomson Syndrome and the other with Bloom Syndrome. The meeting was concluded with case presentations on infectious and inflammatory skin diseases before we flew back to Kathmandu to take our flights home.

The memories, new friendships and professional connections made on the Dowling Club Overseas Trip are unsurpassed and the trip was a real highlight of my medical training thus far. I would thoroughly encourage any trainees who haven't joined a trip yet to consider one. I would like to thank Dr Julia Schofield and Dr Anusha Panthagani for their excellent organisation and wish their successors all the best for February 2020 and beyond. Namaste!

