

BSDS 37th Annual Surgical Workshop, Birmingham
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The 2021 annual surgery workshop saw dermatology trainees, GPs, nurses and allied health professionals from across the UK and Europe come together for the first workshop since the Covid-19 pandemic began. Hosted at The Aston University Conference centre in the heart of the City of Birmingham, this workshop provided an excellent opportunity to benefit from a wealth of national dermatological surgery expertise and embrace the return of face-to-face events.

Delivered over a 3-day period, the workshop was timetabled to include an array of faculty-led short lectures and supervised practical sessions on porcine tissue. During lectures, faculty members covered materials and topics in such a manner that they were able to cater to those with little experience of dermatological surgery, whilst also catering to those who are more confident in their surgical skills. Each talk was sprinkled with golden nuggets of advice and top tips, which could be translated into our own surgical practice. The lectures were scheduled in such a way that the complexity of the skills and techniques covered progressed incrementally over the 3 days. This took all delegates on a learning journey, which allowed us to gradually build upon the knowledge and skills gained. Topics covered started with an overview of the basic principles of dermatological surgery including surgical instruments and the procedure room, surgical techniques and cryosurgery, and finished with advanced flaps, scar revision and dealing with complications of surgery.

Between the blocks of short lectures, delegates were given plenty of opportunity to practice their newly learned skills and to revise existing skills in the supervised practical sessions. These were held in a well-equipped lab in the university with faculty members readily available to offer feedback and help delegates practice and hone their surgical skills in a supported learning environment. We had an unmatched opportunity to learn and develop our surgical skills by having access to expert faculty.

Each morning, prior to the start of the main programme, delegates were invited to early morning small group reconstruction workshops. Images of a variety of surgical defects were used as prompts for the interactive discussion of reconstruction options in faculty-led groups. These sessions encouraged critical thinking and provided supplemental context to the knowledge on closure of surgical defects acquired in the main programme.

There was ample time to network with delegates and faculty members during the breaks, which also provided an important opportunity to refuel on hot beverages and biscuits, and to visit the exhibitor stands.

The gala dinner on Tuesday evening offered further networking opportunities in a different environment. After an engaging and humorous address from the BSDS president, Dr Wal Hussain, we were treated to a 3-course meal and entertainment by the invited magician.

On behalf of all delegates, I would like to offer a sincere thank you to the course organisers: Dr Gazzani, Dr Wernham, Dr Zaki and Blake for organising such a fantastic workshop this year despite the uncertain circumstances. I would also like to extend a big thank you to all the faculty members for their time, enthusiasm and willingness to teach and share their expertise through the short lectures and supervision of practical skills sessions. Overall, this was a thoroughly enjoyable and educational event and it was a pleasure to finally have the opportunity to attend a meeting in person again since the onset of the pandemic! I would highly recommend this annual workshop to all colleagues who undertake dermatological surgery including dermatology trainees, dermatology nurses, GPs and allied specialities.