

BSDS Trainee Day 2024

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Thursday 14th November saw the return of the annual BSDS Trainee Day, a one-day course designed to enhance trainees' knowledge of skin surgery. The day was hosted by the current BSDS trainee rep Alicia Yong with behind-the-scenes support from Kristina Putzova and Blake Denkinson.

The first presentation was from Dr Tom Oliphant, consultant Dermatologist and Mohs surgeon at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle and looked at pre-operative planning for skin surgery. Dr Oliphant made the point that it's not so much the technical ability of the surgeon that affects outcome, but more the preparation of the patient prior to the surgery. He went on to cover consent, management of bleeding risk, prophylaxis of wound infection, implanted electrical devices, pregnancy and allergy to local anaesthetic. Dr Oliphant shared a useful mnemonic when it comes to consent - PARQI - standing for explaining the Procedure, Alternatives, Risks, Questions and an Information leaflet. I should mention the BSDS has an excellent example of a Skin Surgery Consent form here: <https://bsds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/consent-form-dermatology-V1.3.pdf>

The second talk was delivered by Dr Adam Bray, consultant Dermatologist and Mohs surgeon at Bristol and BSDS president elect, who covered key anatomy for skin surgery. Despite a few technical glitches Dr Bray delivered a fantastic talk covering anatomical "danger areas" and shared the useful terminology resource anatomy mapper <https://anatomymapper.com/>

The next talk was "Optimising Outcomes in Dermatologic Surgery", from Dr Walayat Hussain, consultant Dermatologist and Mohs surgeon at Leeds. Offering a multitude of practical top tips, Dr Hussain advised us to always question how we do things, as often the established practice doesn't stand up to scrutiny. An example he gave was of the modified S-plasty, showing that if you have a straight side and a curved side the closure will better maintain its curve.

Next up was a talk on the reconstructive ladder in skin surgery, delivered by Dr Emily McGrath, consultant Dermatologist and Mohs surgeon from Exeter, who explained the goals of skin surgery are always to restore function and restore aesthetic appearance. With that in mind, the decision of which rung of the reconstructive ladder (secondary intention, primary closure, grafts, local flaps, distal flaps and free tissue transfer) to choose will be affected by defect size and location and also by patient preference.

Dr McGrath's talk was followed by the first of two small break out group reconstruction workshops, which allowed trainees to talk through reconstructive options for a variety of defects with the benefit of expert input from consultant dermatological surgeons and Mohs fellows.

After lunch was an introduction to flaps and grafts by Dr Dominic Tabor, consultant Dermatologist and Mohs surgeon at the RVI. Dr Tabor gave a succinct overview of the repair options with some fantastic case examples, including the combination of flap and graft repair to better respect the cosmetic subunits.

The second reconstruction workshop was followed by the final talk of the day on surgery of benign skin lesions by Dr Cliff Lawrence, a consultant who really needs no introduction and who has been responsible for a huge amount of skin surgery training over his career.

The day closed out with a fun quiz via slido where we tried to apply what we had learnt through the course of the day and also from the excellent BSDS online learning modules, accessible to members via <https://bsds.org.uk/bsds-online-learning/>

In summary, the BSDS Trainee Day 2024 was a fantastic opportunity to learn from the best. Many thanks to the organisers and speakers, and I am sure we are all looking forward to the next one!