

BASK Travelling Fellowship Reflection

I was privileged to undertake the BASK travelling fellowship visiting two highly respected European knee surgery centres in Marseille, France, and Antwerp, Belgium. This fellowship provided a unique opportunity to observe advanced clinical practice, exchange ideas with internationally recognised surgeons, and reflect on how different healthcare systems approach complex knee pathology. The experience was both professionally enriching and personally memorable, combining high-level surgical exposure with the opportunity to visit two of Europe's most scenic and culturally rich cities.

The Marseille visit provided excellent exposure to complex knee preservation surgery, particularly around the principles of osteotomy planning and execution. I observed state-of-the-art osteotomy procedures, including double level knee osteotomy and double-correction high tibial osteotomy addressing both coronal plane deformity and posterior tibial slope, as well as derotational distal femoral osteotomy using patient-specific instrumentation. These cases highlighted the importance of three-dimensional planning in modern knee preservation surgery, particularly when treating patients with combined deformities or complex instability patterns. The fellowship reinforced the concept that osteotomy is not simply a coronal alignment procedure, but rather a powerful tool to optimise joint loading, correct sagittal plane abnormalities, address rotational malalignment, and protect ligament reconstructions or cartilage procedures where appropriate.

The Antwerp visit provided a complementary perspective, with a strong emphasis on soft-tissue knee reconstruction, technical precision, and meniscal preservation. One of the most valuable aspects of the Antwerp experience was the exposure to meniscal allograft transplantation. The detailed approach to allograft preparation, orientation marking, root tunnel placement, anatomical root positioning, suture management, and sequential graft passage provided a clear framework for a technically demanding procedure. This experience further strengthened my appreciation of meniscal preservation and transplantation as essential components of modern knee joint preservation surgery.

Beyond the operative and clinical learning, the fellowship significantly broadened my international network. It allowed me to engage with surgeons and academic teams who are at the forefront of knee preservation, ligament reconstruction, osteotomy, and meniscal surgery. These interactions created opportunities for future collaboration, academic exchange, and shared learning. For a surgeon with a strong interest in knee preservation and academic practice, this international exposure is invaluable. It not only expands one's technical understanding but also encourages critical reflection on personal practice, research priorities, and service development.

On a personal level, visiting Marseille and Antwerp was a wonderful experience. Both cities are among the most beautiful and characterful destinations in Europe, combining history, architecture, culture, and scenery. The fellowship therefore felt not only like a professional development opportunity, but also like a memorable journey through two exceptional European cities.

I am extremely grateful to the BASK Travelling Fellowship for giving me this opportunity. The experience has broadened my clinical perspective, strengthened my academic aspirations, and helped me develop international professional links. I sincerely hope that this fellowship continues to flourish and support future surgeons in gaining exposure to excellence in knee surgery across Europe and beyond.

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