

# BSDS 34th Annual Surgical Workshop Report, Newcastle

Dr Keith Wu

ST Dermatology

Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle Upon Tyne



This year's BDS Annual Surgery Workshop was the most popular yet. It attracted ~140 delegates ranging from early career SHOs, more experienced Registrars/Associate Specialists/Specialist Nurses but also GPs and even some Consultants from Plastic Surgery and Obs & Gynae! The instructive and highly experienced faculty were led by the renowned Newcastle Surgical team: Drs James Langtry, Tom Oliphant, Cliff Lawrence, Dave Brass, Katie Blasdale, Prativa Jayasekera, and Natalia Spierings. They were supported by ~30 respected Dermatological Surgeons.

Each of the three days started with brief, informative lectures followed by practical sessions. Groups were divided into "basic" and "advanced" so there was something for everyone and paced accordingly.

The first morning included talks on basic surgical techniques including electrocautery, cryotherapy, suturing and ellipse excision. This was followed by a hands-on, tutored practical session on ellipse excision, standing cone repair and suturing; each delegate was given a pig skin to practice on! Later we received some insightful talks on anatomy and "danger zones" as well as curettage, shave and surgical closures. These talks were accompanied by impressive "before", "during" and "after" photos and was followed by a second practical session on flaps and closures, building on the from the morning's session.

The second day was intentionally more advanced, with informative talks on skin grafts, local anaesthetics, nail surgery and advancement/rotation flaps. This was followed by an excellent practical session which allowed plenty of time to practice and receive direct one-to-one supervision from the faculty. The afternoon was spent learning and practicing island pedicle and transposition flaps.

The final day was dedicated to advanced surgical techniques including complications of surgery, scar revision and an introduction to Mohs surgery. There was a thought provoking talk on wrong site surgery and consent, which sparked plenty of discussion! The fifth and final practical session allowed us the opportunity to consolidate our newly acquired surgical skills. The final two practical sessions were particular highlights for me as they allowed plenty of opportunity to practice advanced closures and gain invaluable tips from the ever-available faculty.

The workshop is admittedly intense, so it was a great pleasure to socialise at the gala dinner at the Wylam Brewery. This is a particularly trendy "hipster" micro-brewery, where we feasted on local delicacies including Northumbrian goats cheese and rack of lamb. The gala was a very convivial event and was celebratory "homecoming" evening for many of the faculty members that had previously undertaken their Mohs surgical fellowships in Newcastle.

Next year's workshop will again be in lively Newcastle Upon Tyne. I have no hesitation in recommending this hands-on, practical course to anyone; from those who are just starting off in their training to those who would like to advance their skills or are interested in pursuing a career in Dermatological Surgery.

On behalf of the attending delegates, I would like to thank the Newcastle team, the supporting faculty and the BDS Executive Officer, Tamsin Goodwin-Connelly, who all selflessly gave up their valuable time to make this a thoroughly enjoyable and educational experience.

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Lynsey Eddy

Surgical Nurse Practitioner, Dermatology Department  
Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle Upon Tyne

## Background

I attended this course with a background of 5 years surgical nursing experience on an acute Plastic Surgery ward, regularly performing conservative sharp debridement.

For the past 2 years I have worked as a sister on an emergency surgery ward and have just been appointed to a surgical nurse practitioner post, within the dermatology department.

## Facilities

The Medical School provided a purposeful environment for study which incorporated a comfortable lecture theatre and appropriate clinical practical labs. Good quality catering was provided in regular intervals to ensure well fed and hydrated learners! Having both learning environments in one place is certainly beneficial to avoid wasting valuable time between lectures and practical sessions.

## Lectures

The wide variety of lectures provided on the course were extremely beneficial, ranging from introductions to basic surgical instruments and techniques to the complexities of managing a diverse range of skin cancer excisions.

Due to my background experience in plastic surgery, I was able to understand and follow the majority of topics covered and gain valuable insight into the clinical knowledge and skill requirements that are necessary in dermatological surgery.

The experiences shared by a number of senior dermatology surgeons allowed me to make links with my own clinical practice and to further understand the underlying methods and procedures that I may not have previously been aware of. This included the technical skill, knowledge and adjunct therapy required to completed treatment, in some cases.

## Practical Sessions

I have had no previous practical experience in excising lesions or in reconstructing surgical defects. The practical sessions were instrumental in providing a safe, well supported environment to allow me to practice the physical skills including correct instrument use, punch biopsy, lesion excision, a variety of suturing options and latterly in repairing defects with rotational and advancement flaps.

Although I was working alongside a number of medical colleagues with a lot more surgical experience, I was well supported by faculty to achieve similar results to that of the medical trainees. One specific advantage was having a wealth of experience within the faculty; all of whom were happy to offer their own personal advice and techniques for simple and more complex procedures, which was particularly useful.

## Conclusion

As a nurse attending this course, mainly aimed at dermatology trainees, I was unsure what benefits I would achieve. However, all elements of this workshop have provided huge benefit for me in both consolidating some previously gained knowledge, and in widening my understanding and development of practical skills in a well supported environment. I would highly recommend attending this workshop for anyone who has some background understanding or is planning a career in this specialty.



*Wal Hussain and James Langtry teaching delegates*