

## **ESPO 2023 Fellowship Report**

The ESPO International Congress was held in Liverpool, from 20-23 May 2023. I was privileged to be one of two ESPO Congress fellows that won the travel grant to attend the prestigious congress. The theme was “Science, Clinicians and Families, Better Together!” The activities during the congress embraced this theme to the dot.

The impressive opening ceremony involved inspiring talks, certificate handovers and mostly, grooving with the children dance groups! The key note sessions were relevant to the current situations and encouraged us to embrace social media or the digital/ virtual / hybrid era we find ourselves in. Patients telling their stories alongside their caregivers put a face to some conditions I personally did not think would survive. Seeing their resilience and gratitude was heart-rending, challenging and impactful to say the least. All sub-specialties were well represented. No matter what room you found yourself in, there was something to learn or ponder. The speakers were top notch, experts in the field, seasoned writers of book chapters and remarkable articles. I remember feeling overwhelmed standing before people (normal human beings – but exceptional!) whose names I knew from articles and now they stood in the flesh! The physical interaction was incomparable. The breakfast debates were entertaining in an academic sense. I greatly appreciated that there was not one way to skin a rat! The hands-on session in the submarine was beautifully set up and demonstrated the vast innovative ideas of skills acquisition. The exhibition was fully occupied with displays of different products (supplies and equipment) utilised in our field.

The grand dinners showed the ‘family side’ of the ESPO community and was suitable for networking in a more relaxed environment. The farewell dinner for Dave Albert was an emotional space that inspired me to live life more fully, I dare say with a touch of wildness! The closing gala at the Liverpool Cathedral was outstanding! The food was delicious! The ESPO organising team did an excellent job.

As I wrap up my reminiscence of the events, I will borrow the slogan most heard on the train with a bit of modification, “Seen it, Said it, Stamped it!”

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ESPO Congress Fellow - 2023