

17th World Congress, Kobe, Japan 5-8 October 2019

My experience by Alison Stenson

I was fortunate to attend the 17th ISPO World Congress in Kobe, Japan to present two free papers- Factors Contributing to Trips, Stumbles and Falls in Lower Limb Amputees and The Influence Of Microprocessor Knee Use On Self-Reported Trips And Falls along with my colleagues from Sheffield, Jane McLean and Dr Ramesh Munjal. I am very grateful to ISPO and Blatchford in supporting my attendance in Kobe, a real career achievement and one that I will not forget.



After a long journey over many miles, we landed in the beautiful country of Japan in the city of Osaka. A bus, boat and train journey later, we arrived in the city of Kobe. The conference was held a short train ride from the city in an impressive venue with two exhibition halls, several presentation rooms and lecture halls. In total there were over 4000 delegates from 97 countries presenting nearly 350 free papers to the congress.

The organisation of the conference was fantastic, we were signposted from getting off the train, the registration process was smooth, efficient, and very informative and helpful staff staffed the Speaker Ready desk. The first language of the conference was English and there was simultaneous translation into Japanese in every session.

The impressive opening ceremony took place in the equally impressive World Hall. The Presidents of ISPO Japan and ISPO International and various dignitaries welcomed the delegates. The theme of the conference was “Basics to Bionics” and this was captured in the scientific sessions as well as the exhibition. The exhibition hall also had a cultural corner where my colleague Jane and I were tightly bound into beautiful Kimonos!

There were eight sessions taking place at any one-time covering Prosthetics, Orthotics, outcome measurements, rehabilitation medicine and surgery. This provided a full and exciting programme for delegates from all areas of rehabilitation and interest viewpoints.



Exhibitor workshops ran alongside these and there was a scientific poster section. Jane and I have interest in the scanning technology to support our clinical services and spent an informative session in the Vorum workshop which demonstrated the use of scanning technology in prosthetic services. This mirrored our experiences in Sheffield, which was reassuring showing how we work in similar ways across the globe.

I had the opportunity to take part in the IC2A (International Confederation of Amputees Association) Think Tank on prosthetic socket comfort. The intention of the meeting was to gather the thoughts of those present to better understand multiple perspectives about what is problematic about prosthetic sockets. The group was presented with the statement: “A comfortable and not painful prosthetic socket is a basic human need that all amputees should have a right to have, no matter where they live” The session involved representatives from different backgrounds, different countries around the world involved in the prosthetic industry.

The discussion questions included; “what are the problems of prosthetic sockets?” and “How can the needs of having a comfortable and not painful socket be met?” The group discussions were followed by feedback from the groups, which were collated. Initial actions include; *The right to second opinion on prosthetic socket fit and function*, *Create a checklist to assess comfort* and importantly for *User’s voices to be heard*. I found this think tank to be very thought provoking and enabled worldwide views and options to focus together on one common goal – Socket fit! I look forward to the next instalment if I have the opportunity to be involved.

The congress keynote lectures were all extremely interesting and well received. Stephen Blatchford presented the Brian and Joyce Blatchford Team Prize for Innovation to Coapt Engineering who produce advance myoelectric control systems for prosthetic arms. On return to the UK, a seminar on this control system was held in Manchester and a member of my team had the opportunity to attend.

It was also a pleasure to be able to network with colleagues old and new and to support free paper sessions by some of my colleagues; Laura Ritchie, Dr Mike McGrath and Fraser Dunlop to name but a few. Of course as always on these occasions, it was great to explore some Japanese culture together. The highlights for me were Kobe beef, Japanese toilets and Karaoke, unfortunately time did not allow for more expansive exploration of Japan, which leaves me only to say this was an incredible experience, thank you ISPO, Doumo Arigatou” (どうもありがとうございます).