



ISPO 17th World Congress, 5th to 8th October, Kobe

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I've been a prosthetist for the last 16 years and recently completed a MSc in Biomechanics from the University of Roehampton. While going back to University was difficult to manage, it did satisfy a thirst for knowledge and gave me renewed enthusiasm to gather information in order to improve the lives of amputees.

I went to Japan to present two papers. The first was an analysis of high and low technology for trans-femoral amputees and was titled "Differences in task completion in K2 and K3 unilateral trans-femoral amputees with and without microprocessor knee and hydraulic ankle technology" where a comparison of amputee reported scores on everyday tasks was made. The second paper was an analysis as part of my MSc dissertation, where I studied how amputees performed a change of direction movement using a BladeXT foot. This paper was titled "Does spring stiffness affect symmetry in a change of direction movement in unilateral trans-tibial amputees".

Japan has always been a country that I've wanted to visit, so I was excited at having the opportunity to go and was not disappointed! Everywhere was extremely clean, tidy and ordered and the attitude of the Japanese people towards their fellow citizens and their environmental space was something to aspire to. The conference theme was Basics to Bionics, which I thought was a good reflection on the variety of care offered throughout the world, when considering prosthetics, orthotics and wheelchairs. The conference covered a wide variety of topics and as expected there were some session clashes, therefore I couldn't go to everything I wanted. Both my sessions had great presentations and I found myself presenting my MSc findings to a few authors whose work I reviewed when doing my own research, which left me a little star struck!

One free paper presentation which stood out was from a student at the Prosthetics school in the Philippines, titled "Natural fibre with leaf extract (PSPO sock) as an alternative material to cotton used in Philippine school of P and O". I really enjoyed this presentation for a few reasons. The presenter was engaging, enthusiastic and very well prepared, but the topic was extremely relevant throughout the world. Amputees sweat! There are different liners on the market to help to control this, however the cost of these liners makes them an unlikely prescription choice for many markets. I was encouraged that people around the world are trying to find solutions for the same problems, within the means of what the end users can afford. I was also humbled by the presenter's passion and thought that maybe I need to also go back to basics – not so much on prosthetic solutions but on my enthusiasm for what I do day to day. On the other end of the scale from a technology

perspective, Dr Max Ortiz Catalán presented his research on neuroprosthetic technologies. This was a fascinating insight as to what can be possible with osseo-neuromuscular implants and the benefits that this can bring to amputees – not just providing joint replacement and movement, however also providing sensory feedback. We have certainly gone from basics to bionics!

I would like to thank ISPO UK for the travel bursary, which was a key contribution to my funding enabling me to attend the conference. I'd also like to thank Blatchford for their financial contribution and giving me the time off to attend as well as supporting me to do my MSc.

