



Lata Mangeshkar Medical Foundation's

DEENANATH MANGESHKAR HOSPITAL & RESEARCH CENTRE

Erandawane, Pune 411 004. Tel. : 66023000 / 40151000, E-mail : jpmt@vsnl.com, Website : www.dmhospital.org

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Dear Sir,

I received AASAN ambassador fellowship award for the year 2014 and I opted to stay with Dr Ashwini Sharan at Jefferson University Hospital for the period of three months from November 2014 till January 2015. The sole purpose of drafting this letter is to acknowledge the impact of this fellowship in my career and express the gratitude towards organization.

I completed my neurosurgery residency from All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi; apex medical institute of India. After practicing for 3 years of general neurosurgery, I felt the need for developing epilepsy surgery program for our region. Indian epilepsy surgery is limited to only four centres in major cities in India, despite huge patient burden. Hence, I went for Epilepsy surgery fellowship again at AIIMS, New Delhi and completed a year as a fellow with Dr Sarat Chandra and Dr Manjari Tripathi.

Developing any specialized centre in Indian scenario is near to impossible task, particularly epilepsy surgery program, which requires lot of infrastructure and qualified people with team approach. I was totally clueless about its realization. It so happened at this juncture that I was selected for AASAN ambassador award for 2014. I chose to stay with Dr Sharan for the period of three months rather than visiting multiple centres across USA.

Jefferson university hospital is a busy epilepsy surgery and functional program and hence I could see a lot of epilepsy surgical work, particularly invasive phase 2 surgeries. I could see many cases of stereo EEG and Deep brain stimulation, which were not very frequent at my centre in India. I could

also see other functional cases so also modalities, which are still in research protocol under development.

Dr Sharan is an amazing mentor and understands Indian scenario quite well. During this tenure, apart from clinical skills, he shared insights about fine organizational details of ideal epilepsy surgery units with technical details. He also suggested me to spend time in video EEG lab of Dr Michel Sperling, which helped me understand the niche technical details about running a video EEG lab. Detailed discussions with Dr Sharan about structuring organizations, networking, raising donations and utilizing opportunities in corporate world transformed my thought process and helped me form a layout of my dream project in India.

With this knowledge and experience, I came back to Pune and joined **Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital**, which is 1200 beds multispecialty, **non profit hospital**. I submitted a detailed project about epilepsy surgery program for donations. Within six months of working, we received generous infrastructure grant from Bajaj Allianz group. We inaugurated our state- of- art centre dedicated to epilepsy on 8th of April 2016. This centres has four dedicated long term monitoring beds with advanced sleep lab along with facilities of invasive monitoring, stereo EEG, intraoperative monitoring. We could equip operation theatres with advanced microscopes, navigation system, stereotaxy frame. In last 12 months of functioning, we completed 45 successful surgeries across the spectrum. This is the only dedicated epilepsy surgery program in Maharashtra and will cater to major part of western India. We could also reduce the cost of epilepsy surgery to almost \$2000 and made it affordable to all strata of society.

Apart for achieving cost effective epilepsy surgeries affordable to all, we could also start tissue bank for epilepsy surgery specimen and genetic research in epilepsy. In addition, Biomedical engineering department has started working on stereo EEG electrodes for its local production to cut down on import costs.

I express my sincere gratitude towards Dr Ashwini Sharan as well as AASAN which enabled me to gain this experience and played crucial role in realizing my dream. I share our credit with AASAN for this wonderful opportunity offered to me. Also, I congratulate AASAN for helping Indian neurosurgeons with academic and strategic mentorship to achieve positive change throughout India.

Sincere Thanks.

Dr Nilesh S Kurwale

Consultant Neurosurgeon &

Coordinator for Bajaj Allianz Epilepsy centre

Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital

Pune 411004

Email: drnilesh1998@gmail.com, drnilesh1998@icloud.com