

University of California, School of Medicine, San Francisco  
Visiting International Fellow: Minimal Invasive Spine  
July 15, 2013 – October 12, 2013  
Department of Neurological Surgery

Dear Sir,

On July 15 2013, I started as a visiting International Fellow in Minimal Invasive Spine at University of California, San Francisco for the duration of three months. My goal was to acquire neurosurgical insights that will ultimately benefit my patients.

In the past three months I was fortunate to observe and learn best of the neurosurgery best practices. And, I am forever grateful to the UCSF and AASAN. In the course of fellowships I have experienced many things and below are some of the highlights.

All of the neurosurgeries are performed at the state-of-the-art surgical facility designed to perform the entire spectrum of complex neurosurgical techniques. The MRI-guided stereotactic navigation system were very advanced. The availability of modern CUSA, complex and advanced microscopes, O-Arm, which is a state-of-the-art surgical imaging system that provides real-time 3D images while procedures are taking place. In addition, my experience with Laser diathermy, Neuromonitoring, Radiology back up, Pathology back up were all worth mentioning.

One of the other important things I learned and experienced was the “Team Time-out” and surgical safety experiences. The advanced preoperative checklist developed according to the team time-out principles improves preoperative workup and the focus of the entire team. The focus is drawn to the procedure, expected difficulties of the surgery, and special needs in the treatment of the particular patient.

Dr Mummaneni’s specialization in complex cervical spine surgery, minimally invasive spine surgery, degenerative spine disease, spinal trauma and adult spinal deformity, including kyphosis and scoliosis are some of the best I have experienced.

Post operative ward and other general wards was also highly equipped with all sophisticated techniques and well trained resources.

With regard to academic activities, I participated in Spinal conference on every Wednesday morning and with the presence of experts it was extremely beneficial to me. In addition, Grand rounds on every Thursday morning included research papers, residents active participations and experts presentation were very fruitful.

I had a great opportunity to participate with Dr Mummaneni in reviewing articles (about 3-4/per week) from different journals and that helped me to learn how to write and review technical articles which are in compliance with industry standard. The OPD clinics were well managed, well scheduled, preview rooms and counseling were very good.

Participation in surgeries by indirect scrub and close observation were highly rewarding.

I, also, had an opportunity to travel to Seattle to attend One Spine workshop in cadavers by experts from all over the USA. I also had opportunity to see XLIF and Retro pleural approach done by Dr Juan Uribe at Tampa General Hospital, Tampa, Florida.

Daily interaction with the residents and fellows was also extremely fruitful.

Last but not least, I am forever grateful to the generous support provided by AASAN. Without their support and guidance from Dr. Praveen Mummaneni's and Dr. Shekar Kurpad, this entire experience would not have been possible. I'd also like to thank Dr Beejal Amin, many other neurosurgeons from UCSF, fellow residents, and staffs for making my experience a great one.

Thank you.

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