

BAUS Section of Endourology – Residential Operative Course, Stockport, 2012
TUF travelling bursary - report of clinical visit

Dates – 15-16th April 2013

Location – Hôpital Tenon, Paris, France

Visiting – Prof Olivier Traxer, Endourologist

Professor Olivier Traxer is a world-renowned Endourologist with a special interest in flexible ureterorenoscopy (fURS). His unit performs in excess of 500 fURS procedures each year, with the Prof performing around 350 of these himself. I wanted to get the opportunity to see someone with such a specialised practice operate to give me some tricks tips and hints to take onwards into my consultant practice.

I spent two days in Paris with Prof Traxer and his team, including a visiting fellow from Canada (Mr Julien Letendre). All of my time was spent in the operating theatre, which gave me an insight into how Prof Traxer does things.

The set up of the patient is always the same, something that Prof Traxer is meticulous about. He does the majority of every case himself, with an assistant (usually a clinical fellow, or a junior trainee, or occasionally a medical student) but no scrub nurse.

There is a single theatre nurse running around doing everything from moving the image intensifier to opening kit and fetching scopes from the dedicated sterilisation suite down the corridor.

I got to see a wide variety of cases, including the second session to complete the ureteroscopic management of a complete staghorn stone, a great demonstration of fURS for a 20mm stone which only took 35 minutes in total to completely turn to dust, a diagnostic procedure for possible upper tract urothelial cancer, and further stone cases. The majority of the work in the unit is for stones, and most of these are tertiary referrals from around Paris and the wider Francophone world.

I also experienced medical device R+D in action, as one of the companies had an R+D rep in theatre testing out new guidewires and access sheaths – Prof Traxer has a lot of input into their design and testing – which was another interesting facet of his practice. We spent a lot of time between cases discussing the importance of elements of his technique, and he was willing to spend time going through all the cases in some detail explaining why he does what he does, and the way he does it. He also showed me his most up-to-date outcome figures which were very impressive, and in part could be extended to our practice in the UK, but some things are probably best left to enthusiasts like the Prof until we all have the luxury of the level of equipment and support he enjoys!

I have certainly learnt some tricks which will become part of my armamentarium, as well as seeing what can be done under certain circumstances where perhaps our practice might have been different.

I am very grateful to TUF for supporting my visit through the BAUS section of Endourology, and hope that this visit helps not only improve the surgical care I can give my patients, but allows for future international collaboration with experts around the world.

Jake Patterson