

2023 ISPAD “Allan Drash” Clinical Fellowship Report

Recipient: Sommayya Aftab – FCPS, FRCPCH - Pakistan

Duration: 6 weeks (8th July, 2024 to 16th August, 2024)

Host center: Children Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), USA

Fellowship supervisor: Dr Brynn Mark

INTRODUCTION:

I am the Head /Chairperson of the Department of Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes at the University of Child Health Sciences, The Children’s Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan. I am one of the first few clinical supervisor for fellowship and MD program in paediatric endocrinology and diabetes in Pakistan. I am an active member of multiple international and national societies. I have been selected as ISPAD JENIOUS AMBASSADOR 2023- 2024. I am currently working as European Society of Peadiatric Endocrinology (ESPE)- YES group leader.

My hospital is the largest Pediatric tertiary care hospital of Pakistan, with my department being the country biggest focal and referral centre for the children and adolescent living with diabetes and endocrine related issues. We are currently providing support to more than 2000 children and adolescents living with type 1 Diabetes through a dedicated team of doctors, nurses and dieticians.

MY OBJECTIVES:

My objectives for the Allan Drash Clinical Fellowship at the Children Hospital of Philadelphia were:

1. To improve my knowledge and experience regarding type 1 diabetes in children and adolescents and to develop our own protocols which can be implemented in resource limited countries.
2. To learn and get hands-on about diabetes technologies like continuous glucose monitoring and insulin pumps.
3. To learn about nutrition and carbohydrate counting for type 1 diabetes.
4. To learn how to establish a structured training program for children and adolescent living with type 1 Diabetes
5. To explore the structure of diabetes centre at CHOP and to use this experience to improve our existing setup in Pakistan.

6. To explore new research opportunities and collaborations and use them to improve the care of children living with type 1 diabetes in my country.

I am truly grateful to my supervisor Dr Brynn Mark and her amazing team at CHOP who helped me in fulfilling my all-above goals.

ACTIVITIES:

Diabetes Outpatient Clinics:

CHOP diabetes clinics are a true example of multidisciplinary approach and teamwork. Every diabetes clinic is conducted by a designated team of physicians, nurses, educators, dietitians and social workers. I really like this idea of discussing each patient within team members before approaching the patient, to check if everyone is on same page or anything important, they are not missing. Each patient used to be booked for 2 or more appointments in a day within same team and each appointment last at least for 45 minutes.

I got a chance to shadow each team member (physicians, nurses, educators) and learned how important is each team member in diabetes care. I found each team member very sensitive towards patients and passionate about their job. The best thing was no one was judging any patient for their disease control and was making all efforts to help them to improve their diabetes management.

I learned about how to apply CGM and read AGP. I came to know about the functioning of different insulin pumps like Tandem slim, Omnipod and Islet, how these pumps are different from each other and what are their specifications. Diabetes educator clinic (technology classes) was full of learning where you offer families different types of pumps and let them decide. I must say diabetes nurses and educator are the backbone of CHOP Diabetes outpatient clinics.

I am truly grateful to Dr Brynn, Dr Camille, Diabetes Nurses (Melissa, Pantea and Alexis), Diabetes Educators (Kathryn, Jennifer, Rachel and Robert) and Dietician (Kara and Kylie) for teaching me and making me feel comfortable.

Diabetes In Patient Program:

Shadowing inpatient team opened a new horizon of learning for me. I shadowed the inpatient team including physician, fellows, residents, nurses, educator and dietician for one week. Most of the inpatients are newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. This idea of admitting newly diagnosed type 1 diabetes patients for 2 days during which time they go

through structured training by diabetes nurses, educator and dietician before leaving for home was an excellent one. I attended all day 1 and day 2 teaching modules and found them extremely useful and practical. I wish I could implement the same in my country, so I started working on it while I was at CHOP, as I feel it will bring an improvement in the care of children living with diabetes in Pakistan. During my inpatient week I got a chance to learn about management of hyperinsulinism too. I am really thankful to Dr Kathryn lord (Inpatient physician), Dr Bassil Kubloaoui (Diabetes Consult), Michelle Reed (Diabetes Educator) and Heather McKnight (HI CNS) for making my in-patient week full of learning.

Endocrine Clinic

I am really thankful to my supervisor Dr Brynn Mark who allowed me to attend a few endocrine clinics: DSD (Dr Maria Vogiatzi), Bone (Dr Andy Calabria), Neuro-Endo (Dr Craig Alter), Growth (Dr Adda Gimberg) and Hyperinsulinism (Dr Winni Sagal). It helped me in getting an opportunity to know how endocrine team worked at CHOP and I got lots of connections.

Educational Session:

CHOP is a place full of learning opportunities. They have their weekly teaching schedules. I love the way Dr Brynn Mark tried to make my fellowship as fruitful as possible and used to send me weekly schedule on every Monday. I attended their new fellow teaching classes, team meetings and Friday case discussion and presentations. The best part they make you feel you are a part of team and allow you to participate in it.

Research And Collaborations:

I discussed with my supervisor Dr Brynn different research proposals, and she guided me how to do impactful research. She introduced me to other ISPAD members (Anju and Sheryl) who are running diabetes education program IDEAL in India and can help in establishing one in Pakistan

Other Activities:

Other than educational activities, CHOP Global pediatric Education Team invited all international observer for a social lunch. I am thankful to Congenital Hyperinsulinism International team (Julie Raskin, Jennifer) for travelling all along from New Jersey to see me and hosting a delicious Dinner with CHOP HI team. My supervisor Dr Brynn Mark is always there for me, and I love her farewell coffee at CHOP cafe where we had a great discussion on how I can introduced structured training program for type 1 diabetes in Pakistan.

Acknowledgement:

I am truly thankful to ISPAD and JDRF for giving me this opportunity. I would like to express my special gratitude to my Supervisor Dr Brynn Mark for her generous support and guidance throughout my stay. She is a true mentor who is always there to help, and I am proud to be her fellow.

I would like to thank Diabetes Nurse Merrisa Rearson who is not only an excellent nurse but an amazing human (thank you for treating me so well) and Diabetes Nurse Pantea who introduced me to T1DY1 teaching module and other resources which were of great help.

Thanks to each member of CHOP Diabetes team for making my visit full of wonderful memories and learning.

Dr Sommayya Aftab

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ISPAD-Jenious Ambassador

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