My Overseas Training Experience

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The planning of my overseas training started in 2009. After attending the first basic musculoskeletal ultrasound course organized by the Hong Kong Society of Rheumatology in August 2009, I decided to further my rheumatology training in musculoskeletal ultrasound (MSUS). In July 2010, I met Dr. Kong Kok Ooi, one of the honorable speakers in APLAR 2010 musculoskeletal ultrasound course. I spoke to him for training opportunity in MSUS and with his kind assistance and approval from the department head, Dr. Bernard Thong, I was accepted for MSUS training and attachment in Department of Rheumatology, Allergy and Immunology (RAI), Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), Singapore. Dr. Kong is a senior consultant rheumatologist in Department of RAI. He is one of the most experienced rheumatologists in Singapore who has special interest in MSUS.

Department of RAI is one of the largest rheumatology referral centers in Singapore, with more than twelve rheumatology and immunology consultants and fellows. The rheumatology ultrasound service was started in April 2004 in TTSH. This was the first dedicated MSUS service run by a rheumatologist in Singapore and in all of Asia. I attached to Department of RAI from January to June 2011. There were four rheumatologists in TTSH who performed MSUS: Dr. Kong Kok Ooi, Dr. Lian Tsui Yee, Dr. Law Weng Giap and Dr. Faith Chia. All of them were excellent tutors who shared their ultrasound skills and experiences with me. Under the supervision of tutors, I practiced hand-on diagnostic MSUS and ultrasound-guided steroid injection. Besides, they also performed ultrasound guided synovial biopsy and barbotage when clinically indicated. In addition to musculoskeletal ultrasound clinic, I also had the chance to run rheumatoid arthritis clinic and spondyloarthropathy clinic, joined their grand ward rounds, departmental meetings, journal clubs and histology meetings. This further enriched my clinical exposure to various rheumatological and immunological diseases.

Although life in Singapore is less exciting when compared to Hong Kong, the various cultural interactions and better quality of life still impressed me. This is truly a trip to remember and recount in greater details whenever I have a chance.