

## OTC Fellowship Diaries 6: Ahmad Sallehuddin Yaacoh, M.D.

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I arrived in Strasbourg, France from Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, January 31st, 2009. The weather was very nice, though it was a bit cold for me. I hail from Malaysia, a country with a hot climate. Upon arrival I checked in at the designated apartment in Strasbourg downtown. It was a very nice and fully equipped apartment for one person.



On the February 2nd, 2009, I went to Hopital de Hautepierre which is about 5 kilometers from my apartment. I was welcomed by Ms. Margot Ham, a representative from OTC. She introduced me to Dr. Gilbert Taglang and the rest of his team at the operation theatre reception. I was very lucky in the sense that even though my stay with Dr. Taglang was very short, I still managed to see a spectrum of trauma cases for both upper and lower limbs under his care. I managed to see how articulate he was when handling the cases. He took a great care in preparing the patient for surgery. He would position the patient on the fracture table by himself; he will not go and scrub until he is very sure that the fracture reduction is good and acceptable. On my first day in theatre, I saw two cases of intertrochanteric fracture and one open tibia fracture being operated. The two cases of Intertrochanteric fracture were treated with gamma nail and the open tibia fracture was treated with an interlocking nail.

These two cases of intertrochanteric fractures and gamma3 nail have open up my mind on the beauty of this implant, which was developed and introduced by Dr. G.Taglang himself about twenty years ago. He was very eager and happy to tell me about beauty of this implant, I have discussed with him in great details about the advantages of this implant as compared to the very well-known dynamic hip screw. We discussed about the technical advantage of Gamma3 whereby gamma 3 nail is much easier to assemble and to apply to the patient with very minimal soft tissue damage. So blood loss during surgery is also very minimal. Surgical timing is shorter compared to hip screw (At average Dr. Taglang does the surgery for Gamma nail in less than 30 minutes-His favorite words are 'waiting for the scrub nurse to go and pick-up the nail is longer than the surgery itself' ) and the most important one is reduced time and dose of image intensify radiation to both patient and operating personnel. In term of biomechanical, Gamma nail is more stable and it is a load sharing device. Gamma nail is not only suitable for ordinary Intertrochanteric fracture but also for pathological fracture or metastasis to the femur. Whereby normally a long gamma nail is preferred. We also spend some time discussing the evolution of gamma nail to gamma 3 nail. Dr. taglang also tell me the differences between a gamma nail and the similar nail from other manufacturer like PFN-A nail.

I also saw him doing an interlocking nail using a S2 nail. I start to like this S2 nail when I found out that this nail uses very minimal instruments as compared to the other nail. It also uses the same jig for all the lower limbs fracture. Dr. Taglang has shown me the tips and tricks while doing his surgery to get the most of it. I also had opportunity to join his team doing the morning rounds and pre-operative discussion in the evening every day. This is the time where teaching and learning to the junior surgeon and residents is maximum the most important thing is everybody enjoy the session very much. During this time also they take the opportunity to scrutinize each case in great details.

I envy Dr. Taglang, his team and this hospital where they can provide the best treatment to the trauma patient. They have the theatre facilities everyday for surgery making their patients waiting time is very minimal. They also have a very dedicated anesthetist team to provide them the service that they render efficiently without much hassle.

Apart from my busy schedule with Dr. Taglang, I still managed to explore the beauty of Strasbourg. I went to see the European Parliament and a few great building around this city. The people here are very nice. They make my presence welcomed. The shortcomings that I experienced during my stay is the weather which very uncertain. I also regret that I could not understand French very well, which I think if I do then my short stint here in Strasbourg will be much more beneficial.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank OTC foundation, Dr. G.Taglang and his team and also the Hopital de Hautepierre for providing me the chance to gain some new knowledge, learning new surgical techniques, created new circle of friends and a lifetime experience in Strasbourg. I will definitely bring home the new experience that I got from here to benefit the people in my hometown.

Thank you!

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