

Partnerships in hand surgery

Jonathan Hobby

Hand Surgery is an interface speciality comprising both plastic and orthopaedic surgeons. Since the formation of our society in 1952, the two specialities have worked together. We created the first interface fellowships in 1991 and all of our activities rely on a partnership between our two parent specialities.



Jonathan Hobby is a Consultant Orthopaedic and Hand Surgeon at the Hampshire Hospitals, and is the current President of the British Society for Surgery of the Hand.

In my own training I spent a year as an interface fellow in an advanced training post in hand surgery with the majority of my time spent at the St Andrew's Centre for Plastic Surgery in Chelmsford. One of our recent initiatives is the 'Hand in hand with Ukraine' webinar series, which started in March a few weeks after the Russian invasion. The series is held in partnership with FESSH (the Federation of European Society for Surgery of the Hand) and the Ukrainian Hand Society. Surgeons from the UK and Europe with experience of surgery in conflicts deliver instructional lectures and discuss current cases with Ukrainian surgeons.

It is therefore fitting that the three articles in this subspecialty section all involve partnerships.

The management of closed extensor tendon injuries is increasingly delivered in partnership with our hand therapy colleagues, with considerable recent advances in splinting and the evidence base for non-operative management.

The BSSH has launched an initiative in partnership with industry to raise awareness of high-pressure injection injuries. These may initially seem innocuous and are often neglected both by the patient and first contact clinicians. However, they have serious consequences with swelling, compartment syndrome and secondary infection, which all too often leads to tissue loss and amputation. Outcomes are significantly improved if the severity of the injury is recognised early, and surgical decompression and debridement is performed urgently.

The final article reviews the Society's work to develop global partnerships over the last decade. This has particularly focused on support and training for our orthopaedic and plastic surgery colleagues from countries with less resources than our own. A highlight of these efforts was the recent triennial International Hand Surgery Federation meeting (IFSSH) held in London in June of this year; the first time the meeting has been held in the UK. As a truly international meeting, speakers were invited from our project countries and were sponsored to contribute to sessions including the management of infection, burns contractures, neglected trauma and congenital surgery. There was also a virtual complex case discussion with surgeons joining virtually from around the world. There was a fellowship program with 30 of the brightest young surgeons from high and low-income countries around the world visiting 18 UK hand surgery centres. In addition to seeing new techniques, this group have formed lasting friendships with daily case discussions on their WhatsApp group. ■



The International Fellows and Invited LMIC Speakers at a teaching day at the Royal College of Surgeons of England before the IFSSH, IFSHT and FESSH combined congress in June 2022