FESSH Research Fellowship 2025 Experience
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As part of the 2025 FESSH Research Fellowship Programme, I had the pleasure of visiting the Hand Surgery Unit at Helsinki University Hospital (HUS) in Finland. I had the pleasure of meeting this year's host and organiser of the congress, **Prof. Jorma Ryhänen**. This fellowship focused on the integration of hand surgery with research, teaching and emerging technologies such as AI and advanced imaging.

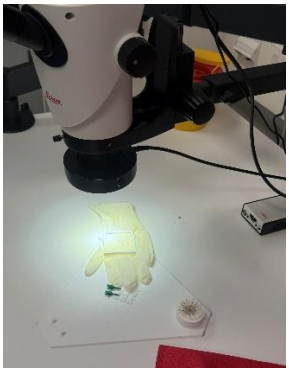
From the first contact, **Prof. Ryhänen and Dr. Nordback** gave us a warm welcome. I also met two other clinical fellows who had spent a week in Tampere previously. As a research fellow, I spent a week in Helsinki prior to the FESSH Congress.

After a brief introduction over a cup of coffee, we headed out on a "walking tour" of the hospital, where we saw the outpatient clinic, the local anaesthetic theatre, the operating theatres, the ward, the microsurgical dry lab, and the 3D printing facilities. I then spent the rest of my day with **Dr. Susanna Stjernberg-Salmela**, with whom I discussed ongoing randomised controlled trials and other interesting projects at the unit. The concept of sham surgery was new to me as I could not imagine how to recruit and obtain consent from a patient for a trial in which they might not undergo surgery at all, yet still end up with an operating scar. I quickly realised that Finns have a lot of trust in their healthcare system, and are happy to take part in single-centre or multicentre randomised trials, as these contribute to science. Unsurprisingly, their loss to follow-up or dropout rates are very low.

The next day, I spent time with **Professor Jorma Ryhänen**, who showed me a video of the first hand transplant in Finland. It was very eye-opening, as I could see how much meticulous planning had gone into the project, from cadaver training and auditing processes to careful

patient selection and organisational overhauls. I truly appreciated the honesty and self-critique, and it was also interesting to hear the patient's perspective. I spent the rest of the day getting an overview of ongoing and past studies, as well as a description of clinical practice and fellowship impressions in Singapore from **Dr Panu Nordback**. At the end of the day, we exchanged lots of interesting ideas and I got to discuss the microsurgical series with **Dr Simo Mattila**.

On the third day, all the fellows attended a morning teaching session held in English, which covered all the randomized controlled trials in hand surgery conducted in 2024. I then spent another productive day with talks on: Wrist imaging with **Dr Nora Suojärvi** and Major trauma with **Dr Georgios Pierides**. In the afternoon, we stumbled upon a Bioglass workshop, which was also held in English.



On the last day, I had the pleasure of engaging in discussions about the hot topic of artificial intelligence (AI) applications in hand imaging with **Dr Turkka Anttila** and **Arno Butzow**. I then joined **Dr Kirsi Kujanpää** at the local anaesthetic theatre, where I observed the WALANT (wide-awake local anaesthesia no tourniquet) procedures and workflow. They are currently recruiting patients for a cost-effectiveness study on patients with carpal tunnel syndrome. All in all, I have witnessed lots of stimulating discussions, challenging procedures performed at very high standards. Overall, it has been an unforgettable experience with countless learning points, at a research, professional and personal level.

Everyone made me feel so welcome and I truly took a lot from all of you, certainly much more than I anticipated. The whole fellowship was very well organised, and I am beyond grateful for this experience. I would like to thank the FESSH organisers for providing me with this wonderful opportunity, which has shaped me as a doctor, researcher and human being. I gained wonderful insights and invaluable advice from experts, and I had the pleasure of meeting and spending a midsummer weekend with lovely hand surgeons from across the globe. Collaboration, innovation and collegiality are certainly the keys to achieving common goals and improving patient care in hand surgery.