

**Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology International Fellowship Program (APAO IFP):
Department of Ophthalmology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Auckland, New Zealand.
Eye Department, Greenlane Clinical Centre, Auckland, New Zealand.
Subspecialty: Vitreo-retinal**

It was a great honor to be shortlisted as one of the beneficiaries for the APAO IFP. It was a once in a life opportunity to be a part of the Vitreoretinal unit in the National Eye Centre of New Zealand, which consist of Department of Ophthalmology in University of Auckland and the Eye Department of Greenlane Clinical Centre.



(Faculty of Medicine, University of Auckland)



(Main building, Greenlane Clinical Centre, Auckland)

During the IFP I had a great opportunity to join the excellent team of vitreo-retinal surgeons in both clinical duties and surgical session. My goal of the APAO IFP was to sharpen my surgical skill through exposure of variety of surgical retina cases. Attending VR clinic was an exciting experience for me as I could participate in the discussion and management of different patients. Each management plan was individualized.

The operating session was very rewarding. The state-of-art operating theater in Greenlane Clinical Centre provides the best surgical service to patients and excellent teaching opportunity to trainees. It was fully equipped with high-resolution operating microscope, cataract surgery suite, state-of-art micro-instrument and intraoperative optical coherencetomography.

Getting hands on is not a problem here as it is the centre of referral of all VR related cases from all over North Island of New Zealand. Once you are deemed competent by your supervisors, I was able to operate independently and even have my own list. I learned a lot from my supervisors as well as they guided me to perform all the variety of VR cases, each with different approaches.



(With VR fellow Veerle from Belgium on my right and Clairton deSouza, VR consultant on my left)



(With Will Cunningham, VR consultant, a chill guy in theater and clinic, excellent person to work with)

In addition, I had an opportunity to participate in a research project where I observed and discovered a very important clinical application which is MRI imaging of the crystalline lens post vitrectomy.

In this retrospective clinical case series, we observed an association of pars plana vitrectomy with clinical significant cataract formation in MRI imaging. This finding is important as patients with anatomical successful reattachment of retina often had deterioration of vision about 6 months after primary repair due to cataract formation and this study help us to determine the time frame for us to intervene once that happen.

Upon completion of the APAO IFP, I returned to my home country with a broader perspective in the VR discipline. I will be in my university hospital (HUSM) to strengthen the vitreo-retinal unit and at the same time share the burden with Ministry of Health hospital in managing retinal cases in Kelantan. With the surgical pearls I have learnt during the program, I have more clinical management and treatment options and my surgical knowledge has also improved.

The training encouraged me to always plan ahead and maintain simplicity for all cases in the benefits of patients, instead of rigidly following clinical guideline and textbook recommendation. The APAO IFP has certainly provided me a platform to be a better Vitreo-retinal surgeon.