

**Eastern European Course on Hand Surgery:
Hand Reconstruction in Trauma and Rheumatoid Arthritis
4-6 September 2015, Hajdúszoboszló, Hungary**

The care for rheumatoid arthritis has changed since the introduction of highly effective disease modifying drugs such as the biologics that were designed to target inflammatory mediators for this disease. Two years ago, Dr. Daniel Herren and Kevin Chung conceived the idea of teaching a course focused on the care for the rheumatoid hand for surgeons in Eastern European countries, a region that cannot afford the use of these highly expensive biologics. In Eastern Europe, rheumatoid hand deformities are common despite the best efforts of surgeons because understanding of the treatment of rheumatoid hand deformities is still in its infancy.

With the collaboration of the IFSSH, FESSH, and ERASS including the support of the companies Synthes and Medartis, a highly successful course was held in Hajdusoboszlo with the guidance of Dr. Zsolt Szabó, Ninety three registrants attended a three day course. Half of the participants received financial support including free registration, accommodation and food. The meeting's highlight was a cadaver course on the first day in the beautiful facility at the University of Debrecen. Prominent surgeons with an international reputation on rheumatoid hand surgery participated in this course including Dr. Zsolt Szabó, Dr. Alfredo Olazabal, Dr. Philippe Bellemère, Dr. Massimo Ceruso and Dr. Renato Fricker. The procedures demonstrated ranged from MCP joint fusion of the thumb, metacarpophalangeal joint arthroplasty as well as PIP implant arthroplasty. Participants interacted with the faculty from the auditorium by seeing live-feeds from the cadaver lab and moderated by Dr. Zsolt Szabó.

The remaining days were also highly successful by having presentations on common rheumatoid themes for the elbow, wrist, and hand. Concepts discussed include the treatment of swan-neck and boutonnière deformity, arthroplasty and fusion procedures, and elbow reconstruction. Additionally, the participants were instructed in the medical treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and outcomes research as well as the appropriate patient selection for surgery. The participants hailed from more than a dozen countries including Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Czech Republic and Slovakia. At the end of the course, certificates were given to the participants signed by the course Chairmen.

Dr Herren and I are gratified by the generous support from IFSSH, FESSH, ERASS and as well of Synthes and Medartis, which also provided the instruments and implants for the demonstrations. The outstanding coordination of the course by staff Krisztina Szigedi and Dr.Zsolt Szabó facilitated a wonderful venue in a cost effective and highly efficient manner to disseminate the principles of rheumatoid hand surgery for much needed care in Eastern Europe. We as Chairmen are most delighted of the success of this course and the interest it created. Many contacts were made and ideas exchanged. The vision to address a gap in knowledge and much needed training in Eastern Europe has been fulfilled. Until such time when rheumatoid arthritis is cured, hand surgeons will continue to play a prominent role in ameliorating the devastation of rheumatoid

arthritis and improving the quality of life for patients who can carry out activities of daily living and also be productive contributing members of society.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Herren and Kevin C. Chung



The faculty of the Hungary course 2015: From left to right: Renato Fricker, Philippe Bellemère, Daniel Herren, Kevin Chung, Zsolt Szabó and Alfredo Olazabal (missing Massimo Ceruso)



Faculty and participants of the 2015 Hungary course



Kevin Chung and Daniel Herren while teaching during the surgical demonstrations



Kevin Chung demonstrating MP joint arthroplasty



Zsolt Szabó during the surgical demonstration in a well equipped environment