

FELLOWSHIP REPORT – DR. NIROSH SUBRAMANIAM APSS – GANGA HOSPITAL SPINE FELLOWSHIP

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Asia Pacific Spine Society (APSS) and Ganga Hospital, Coimbatore for selecting me for the Spine Fellowship Program held from the 14th of April 2025 to 3rd May 2025. My heartfelt thanks go to Prof. Dato' Dr. Shivanthan and Ms. Jennifer Matthew from APSS, and Mr. Mohan from Ganga Hospital, for their kind support and excellent coordination that ensured a smooth and enriching fellowship experience. I would also like to thank my fellow colleague for covering my duties during my absence.

This fellowship was an incredible opportunity for me to witness firsthand the functioning of one of the busiest and most advanced spine centers in Asia. It provided me with valuable learning experiences, clinical exposure, and the chance to build lasting professional relationships.

I travelled from Colombo to Coimbatore on the 13th of April 2025. Upon arrival at Coimbatore International Airport, I was warmly welcomed by a Ganga Hospital staff member who took me to the Ganga Hospital Guest where the accommodation had been arranged. The facility was clean, comfortable, and well-maintained, with daily housekeeping and laundry services. It was conveniently located around 3 km from the hospital, and transportation was provided every morning and evening.

Ganga Hospital is a 650-bed super-specialty institution dedicated exclusively to Orthopaedics, Plastic Surgery, and Trauma Surgery, performing over 2,500 spine surgeries annually. On my first day, I had the privilege of meeting Prof. S. Rajasekaran in the operating theatre. From that moment, I was deeply inspired by his leadership and surgical excellence. I was fortunate to observe and assist in multiple spine surgeries under the guidance of Prof. Rajasekaran, Dr. Ajoy Shetty, and Dr. Rishi Khanna, who were all very welcoming and keen to share their expertise.

The fellowship schedule was intensive, with six operating days a week and two to four concurrent spine theatres running daily. The cases ranged from anterior cervical discectomy and fusion, scoliosis correction, and spinal trauma, to tuberculous kyphosis and degenerative lumbar fusion and many. I also observed the use of intraoperative CT navigation systems and advanced spinal instrumentation techniques, particularly during complex deformity corrections.

In addition to the clinical exposure, I participated in the academic sessions, which included journal clubs, case discussions, and audit presentations by the spine fellows. These sessions were invaluable in enhancing my understanding of the team's clinical reasoning, surgical planning, and evidence-based decision-making.

One of the most memorable parts of my fellowship was the visit to the Ganga Spine Injury Rehabilitation Centre, where I witnessed the comprehensive care given to postoperative patients. The centre also houses an in-house prosthetic and orthotic unit where braces for scoliosis and spinal injuries are custom fabricated. Later, I had the opportunity to tour the Ganga Research Centre, which is internationally recognized for its pioneering work in intervertebral disc biology and spinal research.

Overall, the fellowship at Ganga Hospital was an exceptionally rewarding experience that broadened my clinical knowledge and surgical perspective. I not only gained valuable insights into advanced spine surgery techniques but also learned about the importance of teamwork, precision, and patient-centered care. Most importantly, this experience helped me build meaningful friendships with the Ganga Spine Team and international fellows from various countries, including Ethiopia and Japan.

I am deeply thankful to APSS and Ganga Hospital for offering me this prestigious opportunity, which has greatly contributed to my professional growth as a spine surgeon.

Dr. Nirosh Subramaniam
APSS – Ganga Hospital Spine Fellow