

Post-Fellowship Report

Name of Fellow: Dr. O Z M Dastagir

Designation: Senior Consultant

Institution: Kuwait-Bangladesh Friendship Government Hospital, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Fellowship Program: APSS Medtronic Fellowship 2025

Host Institute: Seoul St. Mary's Hospital, The Catholic University of Korea

Fellowship Duration: 29th May – 19th June 2025

Fellowship Mentor: Prof. Young Hoon Kim, M.D., Ph.D.

1. Background and Motivation

My decision to pursue spine surgery was driven by the desire to address the unmet need for effective spinal care in Bangladesh. Spine disorders are highly prevalent, yet many patients suffer due to limited access to advanced treatments. This inspired me to specialize in spine surgery to make a meaningful impact.

2. Objectives of the Fellowship

The key objectives of participating in the APSS Medtronic Fellowship were to enhance my technical skills, observe new techniques in minimally invasive spine surgery, and understand integrated patient care and research methodologies at an advanced spine center.

3. Clinical and Surgical Exposure

During the fellowship at Seoul St. Mary's Hospital, I was exposed to multiple advanced surgical techniques including Unilateral Biportal Endoscopy (UBE), Oblique Lumbar Interbody Fusion (OLIF), and complex procedures for metastatic spinal tumors including PVCR. This exposure significantly enhanced my understanding and confidence in managing similar cases back home.

4. Academic and Research Activities

I participated in an ongoing research project comparing outcomes of conventional decompression versus corpectomy with anterior reconstruction for metastatic spinal tumors. I was also impressed by the efficient data management and patient follow-up system integrated into the outpatient services, which has inspired me to initiate a similar setup at my home institute.

5. Key Learnings and Takeaways

This fellowship broadened my surgical perspective, refined my skills in advanced MIS techniques, and strengthened my research interest. Key takeaways include the importance

of meticulous planning, teamwork in the OR, and robust documentation systems for continuous improvement in patient care.

6. Challenges and Reflections

Language and adapting to a different hospital system were initial challenges, but the support of the host team, especially Prof. Young Hoon Kim, helped me overcome them. This experience taught me the universal value of surgical precision, compassion, and collaboration.

7. Acknowledgments

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Asia Pacific Spine Society (APSS), the APSS Education and Fellowship Committees, and Ms. Jennifer Matthew for their coordination. Special thanks to my national mentor, Prof. Dr. Md Shah Alam, whose encouragement guided me toward this fellowship opportunity.

8. Conclusion

The APSS Medtronic Fellowship 2025 was a career-defining experience that equipped me with new surgical techniques and a broader academic vision. I am committed to applying the knowledge and skills acquired during this fellowship to elevate the standard of spine care in Bangladesh.

