Name- Sheryl Salis

Allan Drash Fellowship Awardee, 2021

Host Center: The Children's Hospital at Westmead, Sydney

3 days at John Hunter Children's Hospital, one day at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, one day at Royal North Shore Hospital and two days at the Young Adults Clinic, Diabetes & Endocrinology Ambulatory Care Centre, Westmead Hospital

Date- 1st November 2022 to 10th December 2022

Report:

My fellowship at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead, Sydney commenced on 1st November 2022. Heartfelt gratitude to ISPAD for this wonderful opportunity which has been a life changing experience for me both personally and professionally.

I place on record my sincere gratitude to entire team at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead for hosting me and for coordinating and organizing my visit to different hospitals and clinics to ensure that I get maximum exposure.

I would also like to place on record my heartfelt gratitude to the teams at John Hunter Children’s Hospital, Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick, Royal North Shore Hospital and Young Adults Clinic, Diabetes & Endocrinology Ambulatory Care Centre, Westmead Hospital.

Summarizing the unique opportunities and learnings during my six-week fellowship

1. Inpatient Rounds in The Hospital Wards and Outpatient Clinics

I was fortunate to do the inpatient rounds and attend outpatient clinics with the multidisciplinary team comprising of doctors, diabetes educators, dietitians and the social workers involved in diabetes care. I also got to see children from different age groups (from a toddler to a PWD transitioning to young adults’ clinic). What was impressive were the joint ward rounds as well as the thrice a week meeting by the multidisciplinary team where each case is discussed and an action plan charted out for each patient.

2. Nutrition Counseling and Diabetes Education

It was interesting to observe the nutrition counseling and diabetes education imparted in a phase wise manner right from diagnosis in the hospital to follow ups at timely intervals by the multidisciplinary team to ensure that the patient and family is not overwhelmed with all the information at once.
It was interesting to see the diversity in the population with respect to their cultural and food preferences as they come from different parts of the world and how the nutritional plan is customized based on their food preferences. It was also heartening to see the role of a social worker in helping the family cope with the diagnosis, understanding the challenges, family dynamics, social issues and liaising with the diabetes care team to ensure the best care. The reminders to the patients for their follow up visits and calls by the team to check progress/challenges encountered helped improve compliance to follow up and adherence to treatment. The way the team is empathetic and strives to help parents and children cope with the diagnosis and management is inspirational.

3. Use of Technology

It was very interesting to see that most patients are on CGM devices and how technology is making a huge difference in achieving the glycemic goals of our children with diabetes. I got to observe the insulin pump start clinics and the regular follow ups thereon. It was very interesting to observe the education imparted right from the pre pump start session to the follow up sessions once the pump was initiated. This helps the patient get comfortable with the pump and reach out to the team for troubleshooting.

4) Counseling for Various Sports/Activities

The children are motivated to take up sports to keep their blood glucose levels under control. A personalized plan is charted out on how to adjust basal, bolus doses and meals during and after physical activity (depending on the type, intensity and duration of exercise). This was a great learning which will help me with my patients.

5) School Education

It was a wonderful experience visiting schools and observing the education imparted to the school personnel by the diabetes educators. This is a project I wish to pilot in India with my patients under the mentorship of Tanya from Westmead Childrens hospital and Dr. Megan from John Hunters Hospital.

6) School Camps

I also got an opportunity to observe the counseling by the team of children going for school camps. The team worked closely together to ensure the child feels one amongst their peers on school camps and the teachers in charge are educated on diabetes management. The diabetes educators gave a detailed management plan to the school on how to manage in case of any incident such as hypoglycemia, hyperglycemia, pump malfunction, CGM malfunction. The dietitians counseled the children on the carbs in the menu and how to synchronize the insulin with the meals they eat at the camps. They also helped them make right food choices from the menu provided keeping their likes and dislikes in mind.
7) Resources

The educational resources and food models used to impart education were excellent and something I look forward to using in my set up with due permission and credits to the hospital sharing the resource. I was happy to contribute to preparing some low carbohydrate Indian recipes which they can share with their Indian patients

8) Presentations

I was happy to share my experiences and learnings with my patients in India with the team at all the hospitals I visited. It was great to present our pediatric diabetes educator course IDEAL, an initiative of Indian Society of Pediatric and adolescent endocrinology to the John Hunters Hospital Team. I also got an opportunity to attend presentations by the team at Westmead children’s Hospital.

9) John Hunter Hospital- “Success with Individualized Insulin Management” (SWIIM) Program

I would like to thank John Hunters hospital team for showing me the practical use of the individualized cards for meal time insulin dosing. I am looking forward to using these cards with my patients in India with due permission and credits to the hospital. I look forward to conducting a study on the same to see the improvement in glycemic control using these cards.

To summarize, it has truly been an enriching and memorable experience working with the dynamic and passionate teams who are striving so hard to improve the lives of our children with diabetes. Lots of learnings to implement in my clinical practice to improve outcomes of our children living with diabetes in India. Looking forward to research collaborations with the hospitals. Heartfelt gratitude to the teams for being so welcoming ad the warm hospitality. Made great friendships which I shall cherish forever. Extremely grateful to ISPAD for this great opportunity.