

The Parnell Fund Bursary 2019

At the start of July 2019 applications for the Parnell Fund Bursary were opened to trainees, consultants and healthcare professionals across the United Kingdom with an interest in female, functional and neuro-urology. **Rachel Barratt**, who was awarded the Parnell Fund Grant in 2018, explains why you should consider applying.

The Parnell Fund

For the last nine years Neville Parnell has worked tirelessly to raise money for his charity, The Parnell Fund, with the aim of sustainability for the future of benign bladder services in the NHS by supporting staff, patients and medical research.

The charity was set-up by Neville Parnell alongside Jeremy Ockrim who, as well as acting as trustee for the charity, helps organise charity events including an annual sponsored challenge for friends and supporters of the Parnell Fund. Neville himself has completed many sponsored challenges (marathons, triathlons, cycling challenges and the like) raising money for this cause.

To date the Parnell Fund has raised in excess of £70,000 and last year they were able to achieve one of their key goals to promote advances in the field of benign and functional bladder disease and advertise their first grant for training, research or education within this field.

My application

Having participated in my fair share of robotic uro-oncology operations during my training, it seemed that the next logical progression would be to use this minimally invasive technology for other major urological procedures. Although expanding robotics in urology is going to take time, research and investment within the NHS structure, it is likely to be something that we will all experience during our careers. In terms of reconstructive urology the future is nearer than we may suppose with many robotic cystectomists now performing their diversions completely intracorporeally (albeit currently in a trial setting). As an aspiring functional and reconstructive urologist I am sure it won't be long before our sub-specialty catches onto this – certainly in the USA and Europe many centres are already well advanced in the practice of robotic reconstructive urological procedures.

When I saw the Parnell Fund Bursary

advertised I decided to apply with a view to using the grant to fund two courses I had identified aimed at expanding my training experience in functional urology and minimally invasive surgery. I hoped to use these courses as a foundation to build on in my future training.

What I did with the grant

I was fortunate enough to be awarded the grant and this enabled me to attend two robotic training courses run out of UCLH – one on the basics (An Introduction to Robotics) and one specifically on Robotic Reconstructive Urology. These courses were invaluable and I'd certainly recommend them to any trainee with an interest in minimally invasive surgery. The first focused on familiarising attendees on the functionality and use of the DaVinci® robot hardware, troubleshooting problems and then moving onto learning basic robotic skills including object transfer, tissue handling and robotic suturing, both on models and wet lab.

The second course focused on robotic reconstruction with two days of pure wet lab training. With one trainer for every two applicants there was excellent supervision and training in adapting open reconstructive techniques to suit the robotic environment. In addition, with the small group the course insists on, I clocked up over 12 hours of personal wet lab experience as well as benefiting from observing my colleagues on the course. Over the course of the two days we were able to practise different types of ureteric reimplantation techniques, Boari flaps, clam ileocystoplasty and orthotopic neobladder formation as well as an attempt at Mitrofanoff formation towards the end of the course.

The Parnell Fund Bursary has enabled me to gain the knowledge and skills to facilitate my future training during which I hope to further develop my skills in both reconstructive and functional urology alongside minimally invasive techniques.

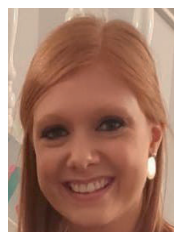
HOW TO APPLY

I would urge anyone with an interest in functional, reconstruction or neuro-urology to start thinking now as applications are now open. Do you have a research project which needs additional funding? A specific training goal you wish to achieve? An idea for an education programme to improve awareness of functional / reconstructive conditions amongst healthcare professionals or the general public? Start developing your ideas now!

Applicants will be required to provide a 500 word summary of their grant proposal and funding justification as part of the application and can apply for a grant of up to £3000. The advert for the bursary and application form will be emailed to all members of BAUS FNUU at the beginning of July 2019 and applications will close on 31 August 2019. If you aren't a member of this group already but wish to apply please feel free to email me separately and I will send the form (and encourage you to join BAUS FNUU!). The grant will be formally awarded at the 10th Female Urology and Urogynaecology Masterclass at UCLH in November 2019 and the successful applicant will be informed prior to this by email.

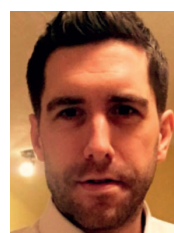
Finally anyone wishing to get involved with the Parnell Fund from a volunteering or fundraising perspective please contact them through their website www.parnellfund.com

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