

WMG *Continued**Siba Haykal, MD*

Reflections from a ViOptix Travel Fellowship Winner

I would like to thank the Women's Microsurgery Group and ViOptix for the Travel Scholarship to the 2015 ASRM annual meeting in Nassau, Bahamas. I left the cold winter in Toronto, Canada as a fourth year plastic and reconstructive surgery resident in the midst of microsurgery fellowship applications. I was happy to land in the sunny and warm(er) Nassau and left the meeting feeling motivated and enthusiastic about the future.

Firstly, I would like to thank my mentors for encouraging me to apply for this scholarship. I am truly grateful to be surrounded by such inspiring surgeons who continue to strive towards excellence and who are leaders in their field. Having never attended nor presented at this meeting, I was delighted by the quality of the research and it provided further insight into future endeavors.

The Presidential Keynote Lecture entitled "Piercing the Veil: The Frontiers of Neural Prosthetics" set the tone of the meeting. It reminded us of the importance of scientific research and the potential future impact on society. Technologies which were considered simply as science fiction in the past are now emerging as realities allowing for major breakthroughs. The ASRM Master Series had all of the major contributors to the field presenting their experiences and providing tips and tricks on how to achieve excellence in the field of reconstructive microsurgery. We then gathered at the Pyramid on the Ripples pool deck of the Atlantis Hotel enjoying great food and company and despite the short period of rain, it allowed for great networking and catching up with fellow attendees.

Given my interests in regenerative medicine, head and neck and tracheal reconstruction, I was delighted to attend the lectures given by some of the greatest leaders in the field. I had the opportunity to exchange ideas with them afterwards and they provided me with valuable advice regarding future

research. I was informed by several of the attendees that the "Best Case/Best Save Competition" is to not be missed. This action-packed experience gave me a glimpse into the skill, passion and most importantly humour of the microsurgery community. The Presidential Lecture entitled "Art and Science in the Life of a Reconstructive Microsurgeon" displayed the importance of aesthetics in reconstructive microsurgery and wonderfully displayed the musical talents of Dr. Bishop and the Bahamas Symphony. This was a time for great inner reflection and I felt rejuvenated following that lecture. The Godina Lecture was also truly inspirational as it highlighted the ongoing commitment, leadership and innovation to the field of microsurgery.

Furthermore, the Women's Microsurgery Group Reception had a fantastic turn-out. I was introduced to great women and men in the field of microsurgery and was able to experience the strong connections that have been forged between microsurgeons. I want to extend a special thanks to Dr. Julie Park for her enthusiasm, her hospitality and for introducing me to fellow attendees. One of the new initiatives that the WMG started this year was a mentoring program for women medical students, residents and fellows. This is a wonderful opportunity for me to create and maintain relationships with strong, hard-working and talented women. The Buncke Lecture also honoured the great contributions to the field and the development of our specialty.

I again extend my deepest gratitude to ViOptix and the ASRM Women's Microsurgery Group for such a wonderful opportunity and for providing me with sources of inspiration.

Sincerely,
Siba Haykal, MD, PhD
*Resident, Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
University of Toronto*