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ISS/SIC Travel Scholar of the 47th WCS, Basel, Switzerland

I received the email about the ISS Travel Scholar Award with the highest excitement I have experienced in a long time. Still riding on that excitement, albeit seemingly surreal, I boarded a Zurich bound Emirates flight from Lagos, Nigeria at 5.55pm on the 9th of August. It was a 6 and half hour flight to Dubai, a 4 hour wait at the airport and then another 6 hour flight to Zurich. I arrived in Basel on the SBB around 3pm on the 10th to a warm welcome at the Ibis Budget Hotel. I barely slept that night in eager anticipation of the 6pm introductory dinner scheduled for the next day!

I certainly felt very special as one of the three Paediatric surgeons amongst all the General surgeons in the gathering. I met Randy (United States) and Diem (Vietnam), a fellow Paediatric surgeon from Vietnam who I took to immediately!

The Davos Course which commenced on the morning of the 12th was very enlightening. The wet specimens were spectacular, the bowel mucosa looked like it would bleed any moment! It was an inspiring set up, certainly the result of flawless planning. Many of the laparoscopic and open practical sessions were a first for me (Billroth 1, Cholecystectomy, Intra and Extra-corporeal suturing and knotting). My table supervisor, Prof. Marti was amazing and patient. He gave invaluable practical tips and made me feel like I could achieve anything! Both days were awesome and the sessions ran seamlessly. The staff were very dedicated, and the Hands on Sessions were very beneficial. The variety of procedures also gave ample opportunity to learn new methods and approaches to various anastomotic challenges. The Course also presented an opportunity to discuss our different practices with new found friends. The Opening Ceremony that followed was humbling. There I was in the presence of Surgical Royalty!

The session presentation of the Travel Scholars the next morning was an unforgettable experience. I felt like I would float as Prof. Sarr called me up the podium. I was as exhilarated as I was humbled. The rest of the Conference was also as interesting; The Martin Allgöwer Lecture, Basel Night which we were all graciously invited to (that was quite a view!), the Springer's Workshop (Melina was as wonderful as she is beautiful!) and all other meetings. I attended some insightful sessions of the WOFAPS. It was an absolute pleasure to meet many erudite authors and professors whose names I'd only ever seen in textbooks!

Let me reiterate what an awesome opportunity this has been for me and how grateful I am to the ISS Foundation for it. I had a great time, learnt so much and now have a renewed and re-invigorated confidence in myself and my career path. My interactions with fellow scholars and some of the Faculty has positively influenced my perceptions and practice. I have learnt new skills and techniques, acquired tips not published in books and forged new relationships. The ambience of the Conference has spurred me on to advance my career with renewed vigor. I feel like I am unstoppable! Well, even if this euphoria fizzles away, this I know. This award is the highest point of my career so far and the experience is undeniably the best I have ever had! Thank you ISS!