

Travel Report Summary – The International Surgical Week / ISW2026 / Conference Participation (April 19–23, 2026)

My name is Dr. Alazar Berhe Aregawi, one of the travel scholars from Hawassa University College of Medicine and Health Sciences, Hawassa, Ethiopia. As a travel scholar, I had the privilege of attending the International Surgical Week 2026 held in Mexico City. During the week, I actively participated in academic sessions, a three-day early career writing workshop organized by the World Journal of Surgery/WJS, and global networking activities. This experience significantly enriched my academic perspective, research skills, and professional aspirations.

A day prior to the official opening of the conference, I attended the reception that facilitated early engagement with the executives from the International Society of Surgery and partner societies and fellow travel scholars. During this event, I met the future surgeons and medical students as well. I was impressed with the work of the medical students, which motivated me to bring this experience back home and involve my own medical students in these initiatives.

The official opening ceremony was marvelous. Seeing the recognition of individuals' lifetime achievements and contributions to the ISS was inspiring. I congratulate and thank Professor Sarr for his outstanding work for the society, particularly in securing travel scholarships for many, including myself.

Throughout the conference, I attended specialized sessions in colorectal surgery and global surgery. These sessions offered insights into advanced surgical techniques, complication management in colorectal surgeries, and progress made in global surgery and the works that remain to be done in building local capacity, promoting local leadership, and ensuring that there is equitable fund utilization and publishing. The sessions in minimally invasive surgery, AI, and other emerging technologies further broadened my perspectives in surgical care, research, and education.

For me a major highlight of the conference was the 'Early Career Writers' Workshop,' which spanned three days. The sessions emphasized the importance of hypothesis-driven research, ethical scientific conduct, and structured manuscript preparation. Key lessons included the significance of clear authorship criteria, the risks and consequences of research misconduct, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence in academic writing. Practical guidance on manuscript development, journal selection, identifying predatory journals, peer review processes, and responding to editorial feedback provided valuable tools for my future research endeavors.

Networking was a central component of my experience. I established meaningful connections with internationally recognized colorectal surgeons like Professor Murphy, Professor Alessandro Fichera, Dr. Imran Hassen, and Dr. Sender Lieberman; global surgery leaders like Professor Nobhojit Roy, Dr. Barnabas, Professor Makassa, Professor Emmanuel Ameh, and Dr. Moses; WJS editors like Professor Sherry, Professor Lobo, Professor Adam, and Professor Rowan Parks; future surgeon medical students like Dr. Marie, Dr. Kacy, and the like; and fellow travel scholars like Dr. Amir, Dr. Jane, and the like. These interactions opened avenues for mentorship, research collaboration, friendships, and potential training opportunities.

I also had the opportunity to present my research as a free oral presentation, which was well received and led to further professional engagement, including discussions on potential partnerships with a transplant surgeon from the US. The Mexican night, the intuitive dinner reception, and another private dinner night with Professor Milliard Derebew and faculty from the ACS-H.O.P.E. enhanced my informal networking with colleague surgeons, residents, medical students, and industry partners from

all over the world. These were moments that further enriched my endeavor in my collaborative works globally.

Overall, this conference experience was highly impactful. It strengthened my research capacity, expanded my professional network, and deepened my commitment to advancing surgical care and academic development in my country and beyond. Moving forward, I aim to apply the knowledge gained, pursue collaborative research opportunities, and actively contribute to global surgical initiatives.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ISS for giving me the chance to be a travel scholar and have this wonderful experience in the beautiful Mexico City. I look forward to continuing my engagement with the society and its partner societies.