



STARSURG NEWSLETTER

August 2023

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Central STARSurg Updates

New STARSurg Steering Committee Members

Over the summer, we invited medical students in the UK and Ireland to apply for positions on the STARSurg Steering Committee. We received 55 applications, conducted 20 interviews and are delighted to welcome five new members to our Steering Committee.

STARSurg is a student-led group and nine (56%) of our current Steering Committee members are medical students. Successful applicants often have previous experience with STARSurg, as a Regional Lead and/or as a Collaborator.



Amanda



Balamrit



Hamzah



Luke



Victoria

STARSurg Regional Lead Recruitment

We are accepting applications for STARSurg Regional Lead positions for the 2023/24 academic year. Given applications of sufficient quality, each medical school in the UK and Ireland will be assigned a Regional Lead.

As a Regional Lead, your role would involve:

- Recruitment for and management of a STARSurg study
- Organisation of an Academic Surgery Evening
- Dissemination of cLINical aCademia E-learning PlaTform (INCEPT) modules
- Promotion of STARSurg at your medical school

Some reasons to apply:

- Help deliver large surgical studies and demonstrate leadership skills.
- Become a PubMed-citable collaborator on projects you help deliver.
- Many previous Regional Leads have successfully applied to the SFP.
- Regional Lead experience puts you in a strong position to apply for a STARSurg Steering Committee role.

Applicants must be **non-final year medical students** for the 2023/24 academic year and be studying at their home institution (i.e., not intercalating externally). We have adjusted our eligibility criteria due to the nature of our upcoming study, which will be completed by the end of 2024.

Deadline: Sunday, September 10th at 11:59pm

Find the role specification and apply here:

bit.ly/regional-leads

Please email starsurguk@gmail.com with any questions.

Central STARSurg Updates

STARSurg 10-Year Conference – A Decade in Collaborative Academic Surgery

We are delighted to announce the **STARSurg 10-Year Conference**, which will celebrate our group's first decade in collaborative academic surgery. The conference will be held on **Saturday, November 11th 2023** (9am-5:30pm) at **The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh**, Edinburgh, UK.

Our programme will include talks from leading academic surgeons, presentations from medical students and junior doctors, a panel debate, and more.

Medical students and junior doctors (within three years of graduating) are invited to **submit abstracts on surgical and peri-operative topics** for consideration, with **prizes to be awarded**.

Benefits of submitting an abstract:

- Display and present your work at a national conference
- Receive feedback from experienced surgical researchers and your peers
- Compete for oral and poster presentation prizes

Find out more about the conference and submit your abstract [here](#). The deadline for abstract submissions is **Friday, September 22nd 2023**.

We extend a warm invitation for you to be part of this memorable event in Edinburgh. We will release tickets and further details on the conference over the coming weeks, including on our [website](#) and Twitter ([@starsurguk](#)).



Central STARSurg Updates

APOLLO Study



In January 2023, in collaboration with EuroSurg, the APOLLO (Acute PresentatiOn of CoLorectal Cancer: an internatiOnal snapshot) study was launched.

APOLLO aims to characterise international variation in the **management of acute presentations of colorectal cancer**. We are now pleased to announce that patient recruitment has completed, with **over 1,800 patients included**.

STARSurg Regional Leads registered over **100 hospital sites** across **40 regions** in the UK and Ireland, with tremendous support from our collaborators. We look forward to following these patients up at 30- and 90-days post-admission. Globally, APOLLO is registered at **218 hospitals** across **38 countries**.

You can find out more about the study through the link below.

Project hub: <https://eurosurge.org/projects-hub/1092-2/>.

If you have any questions, please email: apollo.eurosurge@gmail.com.

Acute PresentatiOn of CoLorectal Cancer: an internatiOnal snapshot



Colorectal cancer (CRC) presents as an emergency in ~ 1/3 of patients. Emergency surgery for CRC is associated with significant mortality, morbidity, and poorer health related quality of life. Existing guidelines on the optimal management of such cases are based on low grade evidence.

Primary aim: Describe the variations in the management of acutely presenting colorectal cancer

Secondary aims: Define 30- and 90-day mortality and ostomy rates and their risk factors



All hospitals across the world



Adults presenting with known OR new diagnosis of colorectal cancer



Patients for **operative and non-operative** management



6-wk data collection period(s)



Collaborative authorship model

..... 30- and 90-day follow-up

Primary

90-day mortality rates

Secondary

Large bowel obstruction rates
Mortality

Ostomy rates
Operative complications

Stenting complications
Readmissions

Scan to register

Apollo will help increase our understanding of the variability in global practice and associated outcomes in the management of emergency CRC, through an international, multi-centre collaborative study.

Keen to take part?

Collect data from 16th Jan 2023 – 13th Jun 2023 for any 6wk period



@EuroSurg
www.eurosurge.org

euroSURG
European student research network

APOLLO

Education

Academic Surgery Evenings

Over the last few months, our Regional Leads have been delivering Academic Surgery Evenings (ASEs) across the UK and Ireland.

ASEs are virtual education events which bring together those interested in academic research and highlight local opportunities for students and junior doctors.

Each ASE includes talks on academic surgery and life as an academic surgical trainee, the Specialised Foundation Programme, academic surgery opportunities for students, and a local specialist interest talk.

Don't forget to check out the [STARSurg Academic Surgery Evenings MedAll](#) to sign up to the remaining ASEs, view the recordings of previous events, and learn about opportunities in academic surgery across the UK and Ireland!

STARSurg
ACADEMIC
SURGERY
EVENINGS
2023



Top tips for SFP Interviews

By Moritz Steinruecke |  @medicmoritz



In this issue, we speak with three STARSurg Steering Committee members, Aya, Michał and Yousif, all of whom had successful Specialised Foundation Programme (SFP) applications this year.

Which SFP interview(s) did you attend?

Aya: London and Scotland

Michał: London and Cambridge

Yousif: Trent (research)

What information did you receive prior to attending your interview(s)?

A: London provides a lot of information on the recruitment process – there is a webinar around September which details the shortlisting and interview process and a handbook is published every year. I knew I would have 15 minutes to read an abstract and a clinical scenario and 15 minutes to discuss each of them. Scotland publishes their shortlisting criteria but there is less information about the interview. I was told in my invitation email that I would be asked four questions, of which one would be a clinical scenario.

M: The London recruitment process is transparent and information is published in advance (albeit it can change close to deadlines, so keep an eye on the website). The scoring, interview format, shortlisting and longlisting were explained and information was freely available. For Cambridge, it is much less obvious what is being marked, and how, at each of the stages.

Y: I was invited to a 30-minute virtual interview with a panel of 2–3 people. The email informed me that I would be expected to critically appraise a journal article, which would be emailed to me 24 hours before the interview. I was allowed to take handwritten paper notes regarding the article and my critical appraisal into the interview.

How did you prepare?

A: I started preparing for interviews as soon as I submitted my application in September. I would recommend this approach since revising for interviews is also useful for finals. Clinically, the Oxford Handbook Clinical Emergencies chapter and the Oxford Handbook for the Foundation Programme are great resources. How to Read a Paper by Trisha Greenhalgh is a great introduction to critical appraisal and usually available through your university library. The single best thing you can do is practise a lot of mock interviews with a peer and then with more senior mentors. Read a lot of research and try to appraise it in the run up to interviews, which will help you understand methodologies you're less familiar with.

M: Since I knew my interviews were going to contain clinical and academic sections, I prepared mostly for those stations, instead of focusing on white space questions. For the clinical stations, I revised the A–E assessment of acutely unwell patients across all common medical and surgical emergencies (the Oxford Foundation Handbook was very helpful!). For the academic station, I brushed up on basic medical statistics and study designs, as well as critical appraisal, and then went through research paper abstracts. For both, it's best to pair up with someone else applying and run 'mock' interview sessions.



Top tips for SFP Interviews

By Moritz Steinruecke |  @medicmoritz



Y: I started by trying to better understand the programme and its candidate specification. You can do this on the Deanery website. I then attended several lectures on research statistics and topics relevant to critical appraisal. I also arranged to have mock interviews with friends and doctors currently doing an SFP. In addition to research methodology revision, I worked on structuring my answers to common academic questions, such as my motivation behind applying for the SFP and why I would be a suitable candidate.

How were the interview(s) structured?

A: My London interview included a 15-minute prep station where I was given an abstract and a clinical scenario, followed by 15-minute interviews on each. My Scotland interview was less structured and included four broad questions, one of which was a clinical scenario and the rest covered research and medical education.

M: The interviews were very similar. They were split into clinical and academic stations, during which a clinical scenario was discussed and a research paper abstract was appraised. The stations themselves were not very structured and relied on me leading the conversations, rather than a strict line of questioning.

Y: The interview was structured into two halves, with one section focusing on critical appraisal of the previously shared article and the other on my motivation for applying to the programme, future career plans, my achievements during medical school and specific skills, such as teamwork and leadership.

Would you do anything differently?

A: It's easy to say this in hindsight, but I think I was very stressed about the whole process and if I could go back I would tell myself to be more relaxed about the interviews. So much of your performance is dependent on external factors, including who ends up interviewing you and the scenarios you get. Put in the work and then trust that you've done enough to do well.

M: I would have put more emphasis on the clinical interview to ensure everything sounds slick, but not 'robotic'. I would have also practised across a wide range of academic topics and clinical scenarios to be prepared for all possibilities. I would probably try to stress less about the interview, as the examiners tend to be very friendly and the process is rather informal.

Y: If there is one thing I would have done differently, it would be to start preparing earlier. With regards to my white space questions, beginning the writing and drafting process during the summer really helps ease the rush and stress of submitting them at the beginning of the year. It also allows you to have more time to send drafts to friends and mentors for feedback. I would have also started revising for the interview earlier, particularly research methodology and critical appraisal methods, since doing a small section daily helps ease the workload.

Thank you for your very helpful advice and all the best for your time as SFP doctors!

Upcoming Opportunities



Surgical Writing and Evidence Practice - Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)


BJS Institute and The University of Edinburgh are delivering a new online PgCert in Surgical Writing and Evidence Practice. Find out more [here](#).

New online programme

Surgical Writing and Evidence-Based Practice


Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)

Delivered by two leading organisations



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

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BJS Institute

Delivered in partnership with the BJS Society as part of the BJS Institute educational programme

*QS World University Rankings 2023

Four essential courses

Writing in Surgery	Reviewing the Evidence Base in Surgery	Editing in Surgery	Evidence-Based Practice
Learn to write in the scientific academic style required by surgical journals.	Undertake critical appraisal and literature reviews.	Understand the scientific editing and peer review processes as they relate to surgery.	Equip yourself with evidence-based tools to help you write and publish articles.
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BJS Institute



Open to the world

Upcoming Opportunities



Benefits to our members

As part of our strategic partnership with BJS Society, **STARSurg collaborators have access to a range of exciting benefits & opportunities from BJS** for a minimal annual subscription (£10, €11)! This includes:

1. Online subscription to the BJS journals:

- This will provide full access to all papers across the BJS journals!

2. Access to the upcoming BJS Academy content:

- BJS Academy aims to support the development of current and aspiring surgeons worldwide by championing research and collaboration.
- There will be a huge variety of resources to enhance understanding and conduct of cutting-edge surgical research, including access to recordings of national and international conferences!

3. Membership of the Young BJS initiative:

- This is a growing community of early-career researchers who are interested in surgical academia, with opportunities for mentorship by the BJS editorial team!

You can access these benefits by signing up here:

bit.ly/starsurgbjs

We're looking forward to working with BJS Society over the coming year to make these opportunities as useful as possible to our medical student and junior doctor members!

Upcoming Opportunities

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh – Courses



Foundation of Clinical Surgery

This is a two-day course with interactive presentations, providing a systematic and structured introduction to history taking and clinical examination. The course is designed to help develop participants' history taking and clinical examination skills and further their understanding of surgical disorders in the context of basic sciences and mechanism of disease.

This course is aimed at fourth, fifth- and sixth-year medical students and is also useful for Foundation Doctors and Core Trainees.

Date: 30th Sep – 1st Oct 2023 (Edinburgh) | **Cost:** £135.00 | Find out more [here](#).

Interview Skills for Core Surgical Training

This is a one-day course is designed to prepare foundation trainees (and medical students), who are considering a career in surgery, for the core surgical training interviews. With fierce competition for core surgical training places, participants can benefit from gaining insight into the interview process, the opportunity to practise their interview skills, and from the feedback on interview performance from senior surgeons. This course is aimed at foundation trainees and final year medical students.

This one-day intense practical course is focused entirely on the practical aspects of interview. The course is delivered in OSCE design and aimed at foundation trainees considering a career in surgery.

Date: 30th Oct 2023 (Edinburgh) | **Cost:** £235.00 | Find out more [here](#).





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