

Cathal Hannan SBNS Conference Support Fund Report

May I take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks to the SBNS for supporting my attendance at the 2025 Congress of Neurological Surgeons meeting in Los Angeles. I attended the conference in its entirety, including the pre-conference symposia focusing on vascular neurosurgery. I was struck by the extensive involvement of neurosurgeons in the USA in the provision of acute stroke care, for both ischaemic and haemorrhagic disease. This of course includes the provision of mechanical thrombectomy by neurosurgeons, as well as the endovascular treatment of intracranial vascular malformations. Neurosurgeons have been providing endovascular treatment in the USA for more than 20 years alongside radiologists and even interventional neurologists! This model of care is perhaps indicative of what can be achieved in the UK, beginning with the recently established thrombectomy credentialing program. As well as gaining an insight into the more forward-thinking aspects of care in the USA, a presentation by the only neurosurgeon providing thrombectomy for patients covered by the Medicare/Aid programs in LA General Medical Centre, the primary 'safety-net' hospital in the city, was a stark reminder of the deep and pervasive healthcare inequalities in the US. Due to difficulties with access to the angiography suite and anaesthetic cover, only 25-30 mechanical thrombectomies are provided there a year, despite covering a catchment population of 2.5 million people. This figure is brought into particularly sharp relief by the fact that in LA county alone there are 22 comprehensive stroke centres with 24/7 provision of thrombectomy, but are disproportionately located in the more affluent areas; a stark illustration of the inverse care law.

As the main conference began, I was able to provide support to a PhD student I am co-supervising, who presented the results of the META study-a multicentre study that assessed the long-term outcomes of surgical and endovascular treatment of intracranial aneurysms. This study was supported by the SBNS academic committee and delivered through the BNTRC, and it was gratifying to have the opportunity to showcase this work to a North American audience. Furthermore, I presented the results of an institutional series of fusiform aneurysms, a rare subset of intracranial vascular malformations that require a very different management approach to saccular aneurysms. During the short

oral presentation session, I was very impressed by American medical students presenting work in 3-5 minutes that would likely be enough for a PhD in the UK! Overall attendance at the CNS was a highly educational experience and was made possible by the SBNS conference support fund. I would encourage all trainees to consider applying to this very helpful scheme in future.