

## Awards for Learning, Development and Research

### Pearson Award 2022

Catherine Miller

Catherine Miller was the recipient of the Pearson Award 2022 which supported her attendance to present at the 7th Annual Alpine Meeting in Chatel, France in March 2022. The congress provides an opportunity for Hand Surgeons and Hand Therapists to come together to discuss conditions commonly treated in Congenital Hand Anomaly (CHA) teams, such as radial ray dysplasia, thumb hypoplasia, camptodactyly and cleft hand. These are rare conditions which often require specialist skills and knowledge to treat.

The ethos of the Alpine Meeting is a small group of participants (mostly hand surgeons) engaging in face-to-face presentations and informal case discussions. The environment encourages greater discussion and critical appraisal of practices. Catherine's overall aim in attending the meeting was to improve her clinical practice working with children and young people with congenital hand anomalies, by appraising her own practice, increasing her awareness of best evidence within this field, and comparing and sharing splinting skills with other professionals. Her role in this conference was to deliver audio-visual presentations and contribute to the case discussions, especially with regards to current hand therapy practice in this field.

Catherine works as an Occupational Therapist in a Plastic Surgery team in a children's hospital in London. Her clinical duties include the assessment and treatment of children and young people born with hand anomalies. She works closely with the other members of the team including other Occupational Therapists, Plastic Surgeons, Specialty Doctors, Clinical Nurse Specialists, a Physiotherapist, and a Psychologist to treat patients holistically.

At congress Catherine presented on camptodactyly a condition where the little finger has a flexion contracture at the proximal interphalangeal (PIP) joint. She was able to share treatment ideas including splint patterns and specific materials used in the treatment of camptodactyly, show the thermoplastic splint patterns used in her practice, and describe the advised wearing regime. She was also able to share a post-operative protocol for pollicisation, a surgical procedure that makes the index finger into a thumb and shared the findings of the patient reported outcome measure used in her place of work with patients who have undergone this procedure. One of the surgeons present contacted the Occupational Therapist she works with to share the patterns they use, and Catherine made contact with two other European therapists, and opened a channel for dialogue, including discussion around visiting each other's services for greater learning and sharing.

As the only Occupational Therapist in attendance, Catherine was keen to represent an occupational therapy perspective in this field, and to advocate for her patients and families in a holistic way. The meeting also provided networking opportunities to form new and strengthen existing relationships with European colleagues. In doing so, Catherine was able to strengthen the profile of occupational therapy in Plastic Surgery in this field.

"All in all, a successful and enjoyable professional meeting. Thank you once again RCOT!"