

70 Members, students and guests joined President Mayur Lakhani to listen to the Guest Speaker's Presentation.

Reflections of a Neurosurgeon from Leicester

Mr Ranjeet Bhangoo

Brain tumour surgery was the theme of Mr Bhangoo's lecture. He expressed a view that 'now we are finally getting to where we should be', in terms of the management of the brain tumours.

Ranjeet, who qualified at Leicester School of Medicine, is now a Consultant Neurosurgeon at King's/Guys and St Thomas' Hospitals and Clinical Director of Neuroscience at Kings College Hospital. The centre, which sees 70 cases a week, now has the longest survival times for patients with a diagnosis of malignant brain tumour in the UK and Ireland. Arriving at this point has required the 'help of others to change the paradigm'. Up until 2005 he felt that there had been a very nihilistic approach to management of brain tumours with the use of either palliative radiotherapy or chemotherapy for deep seated tumours. Ranjeet came through a training route which included General Surgery which he felt should be an integral part of training no matter what surgical specialty is chosen. He stressed the importance of a deep understanding of brain anatomy. He was clearly influenced by the new approaches in this sphere of medicine which were happening in the USA.

Several video clips of actual operations were used to highlight the new developments now taking place. The patient is first anaesthetised while the skull is opened to spare him the stress from the noise of drilling. The operation to remove the tumour is then done with the patient awake so that damage to the neural pathways can be avoided by mapping first with the patient giving feedback to stimuli applied to the neural pathways. His approach to tumours deep in the brain was to go between the natural sulci to avoid traversing brain tissue if at all possible. Even large tumours do not invade healthy brain tissue until late and can be resected successfully. He discussed the role of intra-operative neurophysiology and imaging to illustrate the precision required for these often lengthy operations performed by two neurosurgeons working together. Ranjeet is involved in training and neurosurgeons capable of the new skills are dispersed around the country disseminating these new ideas and practices. A large multidisciplinary team is required to aid the recovery of the patient.

Ranjeet reminded the audience that the brain is a 'sanctuary site' for metastatic tumours, For patients with non resectable tumours, MRI Guided Laser Ablation is available. He is able to give a message of hope to many patients who, only a few years ago, had no hope of recovery.

After questions Mr Bhangoo was thanked by the President.