

July 18, 2019 - I had the pleasure and the honor of being selected for the 2019 NREF/Medtronic Cerebrovascular Traveling Fellowship. Dr Adnan Siddiqui graciously agreed to host me for a week of observation in Buffalo New York. I did my observation from July 8th to July 12th.

I did my endovascular/open vascular fellowship at UT Southwestern in Dallas from 2007-2010. After I completed my fellowship, I stayed on as faculty from 2010-2015. In 2015, due to family reasons, I left UT Southwestern and moved to a small town in northern Pennsylvania where I went from being one of five endovascular surgeons to being a solo practitioner. I do have two partners but neither do vascular neurosurgery. I have really missed the collegiality I had with the endovascular service at UT Southwestern. It is very difficult being a solo practitioner. There is no one with whom to review cases and no discussion on different or new techniques. Due to the small size of my hospital, I have limited supplies on my shelf, so I routinely use the same products. I was starting to wonder if what I was doing in the angio suite was still valid and relevant. I was wondering if I should be doing things differently. We are a primary stroke center and I do intervene on strokes when I am able but in the quickly changing stroke world, I was concerned that I needed to be doing something differently or possibly sending more patients to comprehensive stroke centers.

My week at Buffalo was extremely helpful in quelling my worries. They have a very busy lab. They run two biplane rooms almost continuously for the entire day. I was able to observe "the Buffalo way" of setting up, doing cases and turning over rooms quickly and efficiently. As most people know, Buffalo does almost all of their work without anesthesia involvement. This was very different from what I do at my small hospital. This is one thing that I will try to incorporate into my practice. I am sure it will not be as easy as the Buffalo team makes it seem. I observed multiple interventions – ruptured aneurysms, vertebral artery and carotid artery stenting, AVM embolization, middle meningeal artery embolization for chronic subdural and venous pressure monitoring for idiopathic intracranial hypertension. I learned some new ways to do some of the procedures that I was doing that will make things more efficient for my team and easier and safer for patients.

The Buffalo endovascular suites are the endovascular candy store. I was able to see what products they have on their shelves and discuss the reasons why they use them. This allows me to now go to my administration and provide concert reasons for getting additional products available.

Probably the most important outcome from my week of observation was the contacts that I was able to make with product reps, the Buffalo endovascular staff, fellows and especially the faculty. I feel that even though I am a solo practitioner in northern Pennsylvania, I am not really alone. Dr Elad Levy stressed multiple times that he would be more than happy to review cases with me, to help me learn new techniques and to provide any assistance that I might need.

The NREF/Medtronic Cerebrovascular Traveling Fellowship was an excellent experience. I thank NREF/Medtronic for providing the opportunity. I thank Drs. Siddiqui and Levy for hosting me. I thank the Buffalo endovascular team for their graciousness and courtesy in taking time out of their busy day to answer my questions and make sure I was getting the experience that I needed.

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