



Mission Smile Cleft Surgery Training Program

The Mission Smile Cleft Surgery Training Program (CSTP) offers the opportunity for unparalleled education and training in pediatric plastic surgery and global health delivery. This fellowship will pursue an agenda of service, education, leadership, and research aimed at developing a specialized skill set that will include excellence in cleft care and expertise in provision of surgical care in resource-challenged settings. The CSTP is a multi-disciplinary program, supported by experts in the fields of cleft surgery, anesthesia, pediatrics, ENT, nursing, speech therapy, orthodontics and social areas involved in the recruitment, treatment and follow up of patients with cleft lip and cleft palate in the Guwahati Comprehensive Cleft Care Centre in India. The program is particularly suitable for plastic surgeons or maxillofacial surgeons who specialize (or wish to develop a specialization) in cleft lip and cleft palate. It also expected that participants are involved with research efforts at GC4, where numerous studies are consistently underway. The ultimate goal is to further develop surgeons committed to improvement of surgical delivery in areas of high need, who will in turn make immediate and long term contributions to underserved populations in regions of need.

Organizational Structure: The Cleft Surgery Program at the Guwahati Comprehensive Cleft Care Centre (GC4) is four-month program open to plastic surgeons, maxillofacial surgeons, pediatric plastic surgeons, and ENT surgeons with a special interest in cleft surgery. The fellowship will occur in association with the Mission Smile project for a cleft free Assam in Guwahati, India. Training will take place at the Guwahati Comprehensive Cleft Care Center, located at Mahendra Mohan Choudhury Hospital, and through outreach activities that support the Center. The large clinical volume at GC4 includes a monthly average of 250 clinical screening evaluations, 175 operations, and 200 follow up examinations. A large volume of surgical procedures will provide intensive and repetitive exposure to surgical correction of the wide spectrum of cleft lip and cleft palate deformities, and additional pediatric reconstructive procedures. This provides a depth and breadth that facilitates rapid and synergistic education and training. There will be no more than one fellow from the



CSTP assigned to GC4 at a given time, though this time may overlap with the rotation of an international surgical fellow also training at GC4. With an average of three full time surgical tables five days a week, every effort possible is made to provide the ultimate educational and humanitarian experience.

Program Length

The program is offered on a full-time basis, over 4 months at Guwahati Comprehensive Cleft Care Centre in India.

Available Positions

Year Positions: 3 positions per year lasting 4 months each

Aims and Objectives

- To provide an engaging and stimulating learning environment that includes high-quality learning resources and a curriculum based on current evidence based medicine and research.
- To provide participants with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to provide multidisciplinary treatment to patients with cleft lip and cleft palate.
- To foster in participants a comprehensive, detailed and in-depth understanding of cleft lip and palate and their impact on an individual within social, educational and health contexts.
- To provide the educational base for professional work in the field of cleft lip and palate care in order to improve the surgeon's ability to provide superior treatment and outcomes for patients.
- To provide training in Basic Life Support (BLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) and as per the American Heart Association (AHA).
- To equip students with the academic and professional skills needed to foster a positive attitude towards lifelong learning.

Didactic Training

The core didactic program is spread over eight weeks, and includes twenty-five lectures on the Surgical Repair of Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate. It includes lectures on the following core areas:

I. Fundamentals and Anatomy



II. Surgical Principles and Techniques

III. Surgical Repair of Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate

IV. Secondary Cleft Surgery

Clinical Training

Fellows will receive intensive clinical training in the outpatient clinic, the inpatient ward, the operating room, and in the field. The trainee will work with the GC4 team, assisting in the planning, treatment, and aftercare of patients. Surgical fellows will participate in all aspects of care delivery, and will have mentoring provided by credentialed GC4 attending surgeons at all times. Surgeon mentors are responsible for education and supervision of the residents, and overseeing and guiding the process of graded responsibility that characterizes our approach to training. Increased autonomy inside and outside of the operating room is based on progressive clinical performance, and is at the discretion of clinical faculty mentors. Faculty members are ultimately responsible for all care of patients at GC4, and will provide constant oversight accordingly.

Fellows will be instructed in the techniques of cleft lip repair, cleft palate repair, alveolar bone graft, velopharyngeal insufficiency diagnosis and treatment, revisionary surgery, nose surgery, among others. During the four-month training program, each trainee will participate in approximately 200 operative cases. The trainee will also play an active role in screening and follow up clinics, and will be responsible for patient care on the clinical ward as well. Our comprehensive team approach to treatment of cleft patients will be stressed throughout the program, and fellows will interact with specialists in speech therapy, dentistry, otolaryngology, nutrition, and child psychology as they treat large volumes of patients with a wide variety of deformities. These cases represent a significant educational experience for the trainee who will be intimately involved in the care of these patients. Fellows will spend time in the field where they will assist in the recruitment process, the pre-operative evaluation, and the post-operative care patients as part of GC4 patient outreach programs. The trainee will be on call with a staff surgeon. Call is taken from home and is for approximately 50% of the time of the training period.



Additionally, the fellow's visit will more than likely overlap with the GC4 Visiting Professors Program. This will provide exposure to internationally recognized experts in cleft surgery that regularly visit the Centre to participate in education, training, and research. Cardiac Life Support Certification will be offered through American Heart Association training modules. Certification in Basic Life Support (BLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) will be expected of all fellows, and is required prior to successful completion of the program.

Key Teaching Staff

The GC4 surgical staff contributes to didactic education and clinical training. They will lead training in all aspects of surgical and perioperative care, and will facilitate education through interaction with other specialties providing comprehensive services. All mentors have substantial experience in cleft surgery and passion for education.

- Dr. Hiteswar Sarma, Medical Director & GM
- Dr. Hemanta Kalita, Staff Plastic Surgeon
- Visiting professors from renowned Institute will also participate in educational activities.

Research and Outcomes

GC4 seeks also serves as a center of research, and seeks to take advantage of its volume and expertise to offer the academic literature some of the most powerful studies in the world, that in turn will redefine best practices in care. Fellows will also have the opportunity to participate and coordinate research projects in conjunction with the Division of Research and Outcomes. Motivated fellows will seek to develop and facilitate research projects, and contribute to publication of results.

Global Health Training

GC4 also serves as a new paradigm in global surgical delivery and is the result of a unique public-private partnership between Mission Smile, The Government of Assam, The National Health Mission, and the TATA Trusts. The Center was created as a modern and dedicated



surgical center to provide superior cleft care to thousands of untreated children in Assam, with the central vision of making Assam a cleft free state. Numerous outreach programs expand patients' access to care, and are critical elements of treating patients in the region. Participation in this unique model of health care delivery will improve competency as a global surgeon, capable of organizing and providing care to underserved populations in resource-poor settings. Additional opportunities exist to rotate an additional Mission Smile Cleft Centers in India, where full time multidisciplinary care is taking place under similar circumstances but with slightly different methods according to the local environment.

Entry requirements

- Applicants must be English speaking. Non-English speaking applicants will be considered on a case-by-case basis with an appropriate motivation, support, and an adequate strategy for translation and communication.
- Completion of a Medical Doctorate, MBBS, or equivalent and an accredited residency in Plastic Surgery or Maxillofacial Surgery or Paediatric Surgery. A strong base in principles of surgery is a must for a successful experience. Consideration will be given to applicants from additional backgrounds (ENT, General Surgery, Pediatric Surgery) on a case-by-case basis.
- Current medical licensure in India or eligibility for Temporary Medical Licensure in India.
- Demonstration of an ambition and dedication to treating cleft children in underserved regions. Faculty or Medical director will review candidates closely during the application to determine their possible future contributions to cleft care in the developing world, and their strategy for applying the knowledge and skills obtained through the CSTP to this end.
- Ability to work with cross cultural teams in a productive manner.
- Submission of Cleft Surgery Training Program application form and all required supporting materials.

Application Process



Application Form: The applicant should fill the Cleft Surgery Training Program Application Form available from Mission Smile India. Supporting Documents The applicant will need to include certain documents to support his/her application.

- Curriculum vitae
- Passport style photograph
- Evidence of previous qualifications -Copy of medical or dental school diploma
-Copy of plastic surgery or maxillofacial training diploma
- A one-page personal statement describing career goals following the Cleft Surgery Training Program. This should demonstrate a commitment to the treatment of patients with cleft lip and cleft palate in the developing regions, as well as the applicant's strategy for future contributions to humanitarian care.
- Three letters of recommendation, including two from other physicians who familiar with the applicant's qualifications.

Submitting the application the completed application form with supporting documents should be submitted electronically to Dr. Hiteswar Sarma (hiteswar.sarma@missionsmile.org) and Col. Shivaji Samaddar (Shivaji.samaddar@missionsmile.org) with Mission Smile. Application Review Once the application is submitted, we will send an acknowledgement email within five working days. Medical leaders from mission Smile India and GC4 will review all applications and make decisions in Medical council regarding acceptance to the program. Fellows will be notified in a timely fashion of the outcome of their application.

Fees and Funding



Self funding no additional fee is required. After successful completion of the course fellow should attend Mission Smile surgical mission for charity.

Evaluation

The fellow will complete examinations on the fundamentals of cleft knowledge after one month, two months, and three months of program participation. Surgical mentors will provide clinical evaluations at one month, two months, and at the conclusion of the program.

Fellows will be asked to complete program evaluations at two months and at the conclusion of the program.

Program Completion

At the completion of training, the surgeon should be able to:

- Successfully manage cleft lip, cleft palate, and related disorders based on a thorough knowledge of basic and clinical science.
- Demonstrate appropriate skill in those surgical techniques required of a qualified cleft surgeon.
- Demonstrate the use of critical thinking when making decisions affecting the life of a patient and the patient's family.
- Make sound ethical and legal judgments appropriate for a qualified cleft surgeon.
- Demonstrate the ability to teach patients and their families about the treatment process and their health.
- Collaborate effectively with colleagues and other health professionals.
- Teach and share knowledge with colleagues, residents, students and other health care providers.
- Function in a leadership role and utilizing a problem-solving approach in planning care for patients and families.



- Provide cost-effective care to cleft patients and families within the community.
- Manage patients having complications after cleft surgery.
- Collaborate with patient and family when planning operative procedures and postoperative care.
- Respect the religious needs of patients and their families and provide surgical care in accordance with those needs.

Certification

All graduates from the Cleft Surgery Program will receive a certificate that verifies their academic and surgical competence in cleft surgery. This also serves as an endorsement for the individual to perform independent operations for the treatment of cleft lip and cleft palate with top safety and quality. This program does NOT provide a professionally accredited qualification in plastic surgery or maxillofacial surgery.

Graduates will also be offered assistance with credentialing as cleft surgeon with Mission Smile to facilitate their future participation with Mission Smile as cleft surgeons.