

# **To receive the Community Surgeon Travel Award 2018**

By Fernanda Lage Lima Dantas, MD

To have received the Community Surgeon Travel Award was the most powerful and transforming experience in my professional life.

After working so many years alone at western amazon, in the public health system, I was feeling myself away from the innovation, just like I was no able to progress anymore.

When I have arrived at Acre, in 2005, one of the most exciting aspects of being so far away from the big cities was the opportunity to operate all the cases of congenital malformations, with a large number of patients and challenges cases. And it was fantastic for the first 10 years, in an ascending curve of improving the care and training the team and the medical residents and students.

But then the economic crisis affected Brazil, and the public health system start to crash. I was no able to take care of my patients with the excellence that I was used to do. The lack of resources keep it more and more difficult to work, I had to make a huge effort to get things right.

Then I have started to look for improvements to my carrier, how to keep advancing in my practice. And I have found the ACS awards.

I have found it in the internet in the middle of 2016, but the inscriptions had just finished. So I have looked for other ways to improve.

In the beginning of 2017 I had gone for an observer ship period at International Center for Colorectal and Urogenital Center at Colorado Childrens Hospital, to be trained by Dr. Alberto Peña and Dr. Andrea Bischoff. It was an amazing experience, I was able to stay 3 months studying and learning so much.

Dra. Andrea Bischoff advised me when the inscription had opened again.

I have filled out the forms, but was not hopeful to win. When I have received the email on November first it was fantastic!! I have became so happy and excited with the opportunity.

By coincidence we were creating a chapter of Brazilian College of Surgeons in my city just few days after the announcement, and all my colleagues were excited with the news. I was able to share it in the digital magazine of the Brazilian College of Surgeons CBC.

In the middle of 2018 the notice about my award was disclosed by the media. I was an inspiration for my medical students and medical residents here in Amazon, they have felt themselves represented and valorized. I could show the importance of being a community surgeon, that it is a possible choice in live, and help in keeping surgeons in remote area.

All my academic colleagues at Federal University of Acre became happy with my award, and I fell myself representing my partners in this academic life.

I was also an example of dedication and perseverance for my country, what made me proud. The news was shared nationally by regular and social media, and I was able to give interviews in television and radio about the award. I was an inspiration for my friends and for my country.

I have shared the experience with the Brazilian College of Surgeons (CBC) and with Brazilian Association of Pediatric Surgeons (CIPE).

In September 2018, I went to the Congress of CBC with Dra. Barbara Bass and Dr. Patricia Numann, and could talk with my Brazilian colleges about

the award and the experience. We have made a dinner and useful discussion about the importance of congregation. My colleagues became proud with the news, and I was respected. I am preparing a text to be published at CBC site, to share with them my experience at Boston.

In the first week of November 2018 I was in the Brazilian Congress of SBCIPE and received space to present my work and to share with all the society the moments in the ACS congress, and to share what I have learned during the observer period that this award had offered me. I had knew so important information about diagnosis and treatment of difficult pathologies in my specialty, and shared with my national colleagues at the Brazilian Congress.

## **The congress**

I was amazed with the Congress!! It was the first American congress I have gone, and I was impressed with the relevance, the efficiency, the objectivity of the themes, and the high level of the discussion. There is no time to spend with non-important issues, and even the confraternities moments was great.

I have attended the Pediatric Surgery, and the Global Surgery sessions. I didn't know anything about Global Surgery before the congress, and have discovered where my practice fits. I have learned about this great network supporting low resources areas, and felt that my work is valorous and recognized.

I was able to meet people that has the same interests than me, and make connections for a future collaborative work. It opened several opportunities of partnership, and now I am going to work in this way.

Unfortunately, I didn't had time to do a Post Graduate course, because it was at the same time of the sessions I had choose to attend. But the sessions were fantastic.

The Pediatric Surgery sessions about tumors and vascular malformations were excellent, giving new tools and ways to improve my clinical practice. They were objective and with a high level of contents.

I have also participated in the events of Association of Women in Surgery with Dr. Patricia Numann, on Saturday all day long, and Tuesday morning. I had discovered a great network that now I am part of.

I had gone to all the events of the International Relations Committee.

I have make some friends, colleagues and possible partners. And meet some surgeons that I had already had contact even in Brazil as in EUA.

To participate in the opening ceremony, with all the worldwide leaders, was a fantastic experience!!! Unforgettable and exciting!! To seat on the stage, next the flags, together with the great names of World Surgery, was the best professional moment of my life!

I could meet the President of APSA, share experience with the represents of my own country, and to meet past presidents of ACS. Fraternize with Dra. Barbara Bass, that I had met in Brazil.

Mine designed mentor, Dra. Patricia Numann, was fantastic, introducing me to different people and stimulating the construction of bonds. I am planning future collaborative work, and will prepare material to send to them to create a partnership.

To participate in the international scholar lunch on gave me the opportunity to share the table with important names of global surgery. that I also meet then in the governors dinner. I am preparing a material about my work and possibilities of partnership, and I intend to create bonds and future collaborative work.

And in the Governors dinner I knew about Humanitarian Surgery, and all these amazing histories about the awardees. I felt inspired by then, and stronger to keep doing my work. And strengthen the bonds with the other scholars. It was a great moment too.

In the sessions about global surgery I could meet people with same interests than me, and took some cards to make connections.

I have made connection with professionals of global surgery, pediatric surgery, and women in surgery.

I am planning a collaborative work with some Pediatric Surgery center of USA, maybe with Global Surgery professionals.

I would like to receive residents and fellows of ACS for a training in pediatric surgery / global surgery here where I live, at Western Amazon, and would like to do observership periods at USA and Canada, to improve and update my clinical practice. I don't want to loose the connections built during the congress.

I have applied to be an international fellow of ACS, and hope that these connections will last for a long time. I intend attend to all the next ACS congress for now on. And also to be part of AWS.

It was also useful the construction of relation with the international scholar of my country, Brazil. He offered me opportunity to do my doctorate degree with him, and offered me a fantastic course in videolaparoscopy surgery, the better in Brazil. I have approached the relationship with my colleagues of Brazilian College of Surgeons (CBC). Since I had gone to Acre I was a bit far away from CBC, and the opportunity to be at ACS Clinical Congress had showed me the importance of this congregation.

Now I will be titular member of CBC, and I am working in the construction of a Committee for Women in Surgery in our society. I will be part of Brazilian Congress next year.

The congress gave me innovative ideas, and opened doors to help to improve my work on Amazon, by offering opportunity for partnerships.

I am planning to be part of a global surgery group.

About my medical practice, I have learned new concepts of treatment of difficult issues, like vascular anomalies and tumors, and had the opportunity to share this new knowledge with my partners in Brazil.

The clinical congress, and the opportunity to spend some weeks at Boston Children's Hospital as observer, were very useful in my clinical practice. The opportunity to visit an important center of my specialty at USA was extremely useful, an excellent opportunity to update my knowledge and to inspire me to do research work.

I became inspired to do my doctorate degree, and I am planning to become part of a global international multicentric research.

To be in the ACS congress was the most transformative experience in my professional life, it had changed my perspective. There is no waste of time, all the sessions were very objective and productive, so useful. Everyone committed and professional. I could never live the same way.

The observer period at Boston Children's Hospital showed me a perfectionist way to work, and I felt myself belonging to that spirit. Now I want to improve my practice at my country. I had brought a surgical loupe, and had begun to document all my patients. I will be restless in improve my conditions of work here. Hope be successful in my effort.