

Hernia Surgery in Shepparton (Australia) with Dr. Ramana Balasubramaniam

During the Swiss Hernia Days in October 2023 in Basel, I won the 5TH Swiss Hernia Days International Fellowship, which would be taking place in Australia.

My host was Dr. Ramana Balasubramaniam, a senior consultant at Goulburn Valley Health Hospital and a worldwide renowned surgeon in the field of hernia surgery.

I stayed for 10 days in Shepparton, a city on the outskirts of Melbourne, in the state of Victoria, where I enjoyed 7 days of amazing surgical experiences. Besides the work, I also enjoyed the beautiful countryside of Victoria, its amazing wine and food, and the vibrant city of Melbourne.



Ram showed me different hernia surgeries, both laparoscopic and open. In each surgery, he explained where the difficulties lay and gave excellent tips and tricks to navigate them safely and successfully. He also focused on the importance of mental preparation for the surgeries and proved to be an excellent surgical coach and teacher.

I had the opportunity to observe laparoscopic repairs of large ventral and incisional hernias, with eTEP and ventral TAPP techniques, which impressed me greatly.

We also performed laparoscopic recurrence surgeries after different laparoscopic approaches, and I could perfectly understand why this kind of surgery has to be done by hands with a lot of expertise.

I felt very fortunate that Ram could schedule a large ventral hernia to be repaired with the Fasciotens closure system. I had first heard about this technique and technology at conferences



and didn't know anyone who routinely performed it, so I am really grateful to have had the opportunity to learn its principles and see the results for myself. It surprised me very positively.

Observing Ram's structured approach to all his hernia surgeries and his deep understanding of anatomy and technical aspects of the surgeries, was a turning point for me in my surgical practice. Watching how efficient his surgical movements were and how precise and focused he was during the surgeries impressed me greatly and reinforced the feeling that only a lot of practice makes an expert.

The fact that there were surgeons from different nationalities on the team, also gave me the chance to discuss challenging cases, prehabilitation guidelines in abdominal wall repair patients, innovation and research, and medical structures with professionals from different countries and healthcare system backgrounds. I also had the opportunity to participate alongside Ram in an online presentation during the Hernia Carnival 2024, which took place in Chennai, India.



Coming back home, I couldn't wait to share with my team colleagues, all the things that I had learned, experienced, and seen. Having had this experience will certainly help me in my future as a hernia surgeon and will improve my patients' results.

I would like to thank Ram for his kindness and the whole team from Shepparton Hospital for hosting me in Australia. Thanks again to Henry and Philipp and to the Swiss Hernia Days team for giving me the chance and for offering such an amazing and unforgettable fellowship.

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