Harry Barberian Scholarship Application

March 3, 2017

Criteria:

* Originality of the research question and its importance
* Feasibility – do you have the skills and resources to carry out the study?
* Impact – long –term or short-term potential for application?

Applicant’s name: Arushri Swarup

Supervisor: Dr. Adrian James

Location of Laboratory or Institution: Hospital for Sick Children Toronto

Project Title:

Description: - in lay terms describe (500 words)

The objective of this project is to evaluate and develop innovative surgical instruments for the new and growing technique of transcanal endoscopic ear surgery (TEES). TEES is performed by employing an endoscope, to visualize the surgical field, and instruments through the ear canal, eliminating the need for a skin incision [1] [2]. As with traditional, invasive surgery, minimally invasive TEES allows the surgeon to perform common procedures, such as ear drum reconstruction, tumor removal and bone repair, while reducing the length of hospital stay, overall procedure cost and scarring [1] [3]. Despite these benefits, the adoption rate of TEES is low and one possible explanation is that existing instruments are developed for two-handed microscope-guided surgery and are not optimized for one-handed TEES, making the surgery challenging [4].

This project aims to understand the limitations of current TEES tools to develop criteria against which new, better surgical instruments can be designed to facilitate and increase the use of TEES. The following methodology will be employed to successfully complete this project. First, a survey will be sent out to ask expert ear surgeons around the world to rate the importance of various tool functionalities. Next, a time flow study will record the duration of steps of TEES, performed by experienced ear surgeons at SickKids. The results of these two studies aim to determine what types of tools are required by surgeons and what the current inefficiencies are during TEES. A Research Ethics Board application has been submitted to SickKids to conduct these studies. Next, by using the resources available at the CIGITI lab at SickKids, a virtual model of TEES will be created. The model will include 3D models of patient ear canal anatomy, an endoscope and an instrument. 3D ear-canal models are being developed from CT scans of patients who are candidates for TEES surgery. This will develop a platform to design new tools that can fit inside specific patient anatomy and perform the intended function efficiently. After development, the tools will be tested in cadaver models by surgeons to obtain feedback to optimize the tool so it can later be used by surgeons in patients during TEES.

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto, is the institution where the surgeon supervisor and graduate student are working on this project. SickKids remains one of the very few centres in North America where a surgeon completes the majority of middle ear procedures using TEES. As well, the CIGITI lab at SickKids has successfully manufactured medical-grade tools for endoscopic neurosurgery and has developed brain surgery virtual models. Thus, SickKids and the University of Toronto provide the resources and skills to advance the technology available to facilitate TEES, aiming to increase its use and send patients home sooner and safer. Furthermore, this project will present the unique method of developing patient-specific tools, advancing the capabilities of minimally invasive tools.

Detailed Budget