European Rhinologic Society Fellowship Report

Course: Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery (FESS) Cadaveric Dissection Course
Location: Ghent, Belgium
Date: September 2026
Fellowship Recipient: Niall McInerney, ENT Specialist Registrar, Ireland

Course Overview and Objectives

I was delighted to receive a fellowship from the European Rhinologic Society (ERS) to attend the Functional Endoscopic Sinus Surgery (FESS) course in Ghent, Belgium, in September 2026. I am extremely grateful to the ERS for providing this opportunity.

My primary objective in attending the course was to further develop my anatomical knowledge, technical skills and confidence in endoscopic sinus surgery. Having developed a particular interest in rhinology and anterior skull base surgery, I was keen to gain additional experience in advanced endoscopic techniques and learn from experienced international faculty.

Activities and Training

The course combined teaching on sinonasal anatomy and surgical techniques with practical cadaveric dissection. The hands-on sessions were particularly beneficial, providing an opportunity to practise surgical approaches in a structured environment, with guidance and feedback from experienced rhinologists.

The dissection sessions allowed me to consolidate my understanding of key anatomical landmarks and develop a more systematic approach to endoscopic sinus surgery. Particular areas of interest included frontal sinus surgery, approaches to the sphenoid sinus and the anatomical relationships of the orbit and skull base. The opportunity to repeat surgical steps and explore anatomical variations was invaluable, particularly for procedures that can be challenging to gain extensive experience in during routine clinical practice.

An additional highlight was the opportunity to discuss different surgical techniques, decision-making and approaches to complex cases with faculty and fellow trainees from other European countries.

Learnings and Outcomes

The greatest benefit of the course was the opportunity to translate theoretical anatomical knowledge into practical surgical experience. I developed a greater appreciation of the importance of meticulous anatomical dissection, appropriate instrument selection and a stepwise approach to more complex procedures.

The experience has already influenced how I approach endoscopic sinus surgery during my training in Ireland, particularly with regard to preoperative CT assessment, identification of anatomical landmarks and surgical planning. I also hope to share the knowledge gained with fellow trainees through departmental teaching and informal surgical training.

Future Plans and Career Development

This fellowship has further strengthened my enthusiasm for pursuing a career specialising in rhinology and anterior skull base surgery. I intend to undertake further subspecialty fellowship training following completion of my higher surgical training in Ireland, with the aim of developing expertise in advanced endoscopic sinus surgery.

I would like to sincerely thank the European Rhinologic Society for supporting my attendance at this excellent course. The fellowship was a hugely rewarding experience, both professionally and personally, and I am very grateful for the opportunity.