

My Laidlaw journey

LONDON / RESEARCH

Research at Imperial College London

My research at Imperial introduced me to the challenges of teaching surgical skills when time in theatre is limited. The project focused on a simulator for chest wall perforator flap surgery, used in breast-conserving reconstruction. The aim was to help trainees practise when opportunities in theatre are limited.

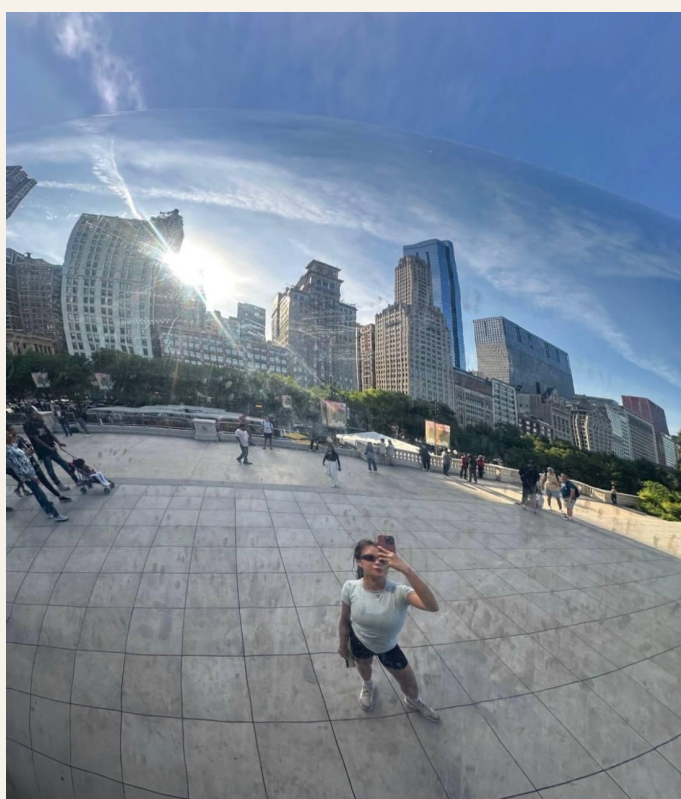
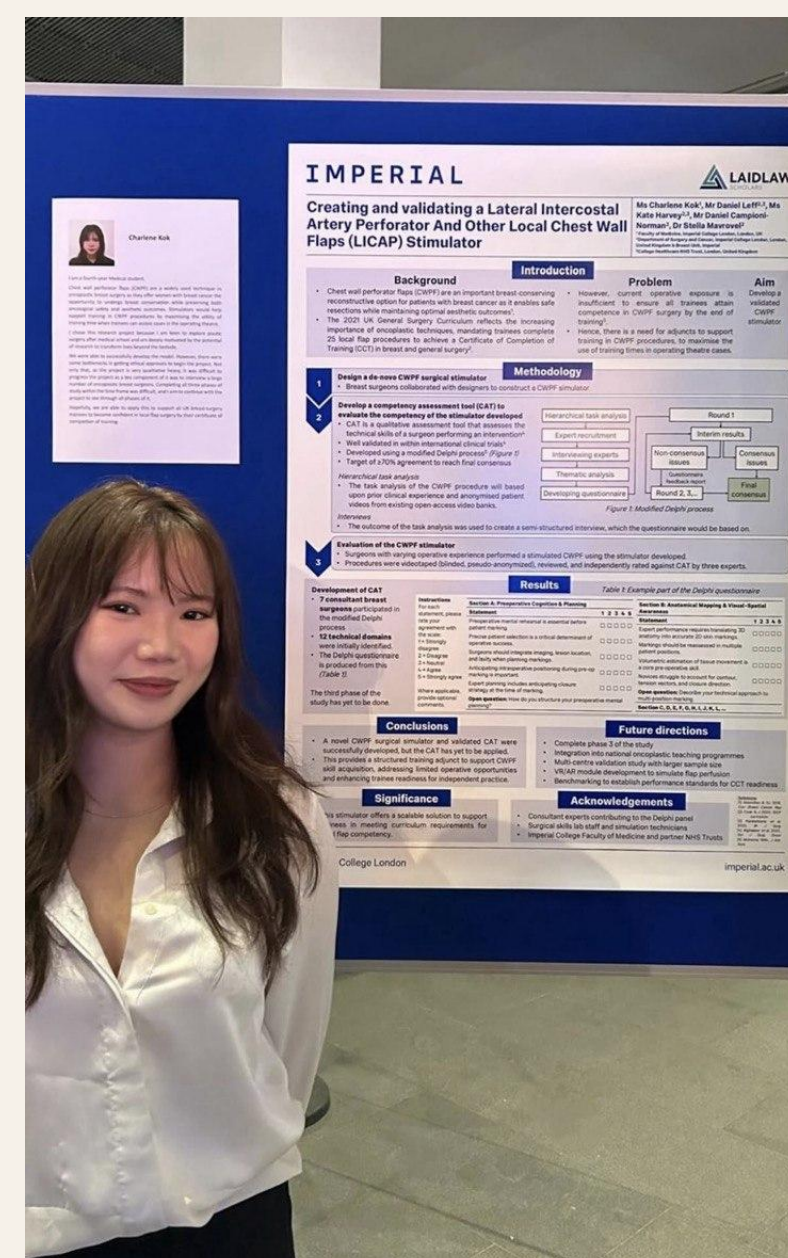
Working on a project that brought surgeons and designers together made me appreciate how much thought goes into creating a useful learning experience.

Skills that appear intuitive to an experienced surgeon can be difficult to explain to someone encountering them for the first time. Seven consultant breast surgeons contributed to the Delphi process, helping identify the knowledge and technical skills the assessment should capture.

The project also gave me a more patient understanding of research. Developing something promising is an important beginning, but understanding how well it works takes further testing. Applying the assessment tool to simulator performance remains the next step.

CHARLENE KOK

I am an aspiring clinician-scientist passionate about medicine, research, and improving patient care. I believe that healing extends beyond curing, but also showing up with compassion, adaptability, and presence.



CHICAGO / LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Seeing the wider picture of care

During my six weeks at Lurie Children's Hospital, I had the privilege of joining the craniofacial team's everyday work. I observed more than 35 operations and attended 15 clinic sessions across six sites.

There was so much to learn not just from the surgeries, but the team. I was deeply inspired by the resilience and passion towards patient care. It gave me so much perspective towards my own learning and career: I hope to carry the same kind of compassion and commitment in my work in the future.

What I am taking with me

Working with different people made me more thoughtful about what I wanted to learn from each of them. I began looking beyond confidence or teaching style and paying closer attention to the reasoning behind their decisions.

As a visitor, I learned to listen, ask where I could help, and contribute within work the team already valued. I hope to be led by an ethos of leaving a place better than I found it.

I leave these experiences with a deeper interest in surgery and a better sense of how much I still have to learn. As I continue my training, I hope to keep asking thoughtful questions about both surgical education and access to care, and, one day, offer another student the same patience and welcome I received.

With heartfelt thanks,

to the Laidlaw Foundation, my research mentors and collaborators at Imperial, and the craniofacial and research teams at Lurie Children's Hospital for their guidance, generosity and encouragement.