



SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

**SPINE WEEK,
APRIL 20-24, 2026**

JOINTLY ORGANIZED BY
NEPAL SPINE FOUNDATION & DEPARTMENT OF NEUROSURGERY, TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY TEACHING
HOSPITAL (TUTH), KATHMANDU, NEPAL
VENUE: SURESH WAGLE ACADEMIC HALL, TUTH, KATHMANDU (ACADEMIC DAY)
TUTH (SURGICAL WORKSHOP)

The Nepal Spine Foundation (NSF) team has just returned from another successful Spine Week with our colleagues at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH) in Kathmandu. We also completed the first outreach program extending Spine Week to the Manipal Teaching Hospital in Pokhara, Nepal where there are several neurosurgeons who have graduated from TUTH.



Academic Day was on Monday, April 20th, and included many excellent lectures by NSF and TUTH spine surgeons. A moment of silence was also observed remembering Dr Merwyn Bagan who sadly passed away this year.

The scientific session featured a diverse range of lectures covering basics in spinal deformity, clinical decision-making, and use of Artificial Intelligence in research. The topics and their speakers were

- Evaluation and Radiological Parameters in Spinal Deformity, Dr Farrokh Farrokhi, USA
- Principles of Surgical Planning in Adult Spinal Deformity: Dr Todd Alamin, USA
- Osteotomies in Spinal Deformity Correction: Dr Andrew Manista, USA
- Extreme Lateral Interbody Fusion (XLIF): Dr Richard Wohns, USA
- A Characterization of Nepalese Patients with Neural Tube Defects and Strategies for Prevention: Landon Basner, USA
- Nepal Spine Foundation Fellowship Experience: Dr Sandeep Bohara, Nepal
- Application of Generative AI in Medical Research: Prof Mohan R Sharma, Nepal

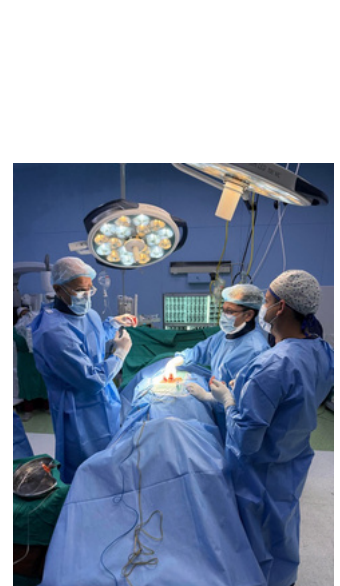
Neurosurgical residents from the department actively participated in lectures, case discussions, and surgical observerships, reinforcing Spine Week's role as a key training platform.

At TUTH, we performed eight spine surgeries on Tuesday thru Friday including two cervical artificial discs for two patients with significant spinal cord compression and myelopathy. Both improved within 24 hours post-operatively. We would like to thank the companies Coast Medical and Pacific First, which donated the Mobi-C and ProDisc-C Vivo arthroplasties and instruments. We also performed six lumbar surgeries including minimally invasive discectomy and lumbar fusion for spondylolisthesis. Throughout the week, we all spent time teaching residents and junior faculty with a focused session on indications and techniques for pedicle screw placement.

At Manipal, the NSF team provided lectures and a workshop on use of the ultrasonic bone scalpel, the Piezo, donated by Mectron. The NSF team would like to thank their hosts, especially Dr. Balgopal, who organized this first outreach program for NSF.



We planned the next two visits which will include a return visit to teach and perform further endoscopic spine surgeries as a follow-up to our successful introduction of uniportal endoscopic spine techniques in December 2025. The second subsequent visit that we planned was the 8th Annual Spine Week in April 2027 which will highlight lateral approaches to the lumbar spine.



2026 Annapurna Fundraising Trek

April 23-28

Congratulations to our 2026 trekkers: Mike Maxwell, Steven Wolfson, Landon Banner, Farrokh Farrokhi & Addison Farrokhi

In April, 2026, I trekked to the Base Camp at Annapurna. The trek itself was beautiful. We started with a short flight to Pokhara. There is a beautiful lake in the center of town, and walking along the lakeside itself is a nice stroll. After a stay in a luxury hotel, we set off by jeep on a rough “road” that ended near Jhinu danda, a ridge top village. We parked, donned our backpacks, and started on foot down a steep incline that ended at a suspension bridge. We crossed the bridge then started up, up, up!

The first night we spent at the “Beautiful View Hotel.” It was a pleasant stay, but unfortunately, the view was clouded with smoke. This, I believe, was agricultural smoke from India, where farmers are burning their fields and crops.



The next two days we spent on a rugged, but well marked trail through a gorgeous river valley. We saw rhododendrons, bamboo, ancient trees, and towering mountains all around, with waterfalls coming from all directions. On the third day it began to rain, which we welcomed, hoping that it would push away the smoke which by now was so bad that it was irritating our throats and lungs.

On the fourth day, we were relieved to see that the smoke was gone, but it was replaced with a thick fog. We left our teahouse in the morning and trekked to Machhapuchhre Base Camp. This was at the foot of a mountain that we circumnavigated, we exited the narrow river valley and arrived at MBC for lunch, we should have had a spectacular view of the Annapurna mountains. Except that we could not see any mountains, thanks to the heavy fog. The trek from MBC to ABC was beautiful, nevertheless.

Later that day, we arrived at ABC, where we celebrated at 13,500 feet elevation. Some of us took a break and a nap, others sat and drank tea, but Farrokh, Landon and I wandered around the outskirts of ABC, exploring the massive glacier moraines.

The next morning, the helicopter was scheduled to pick us up at 7:30 am. We woke at 5:00 am hoping to see a 5:30 am sunrise. When we awoke, we saw to our surprise and delight that not a cloud was in the sky. The entire Annapurna mountain range was visible in the pre-sunrise light. We yelled with delight and excitement, and ran out to watch the sunrise. The sun climbed quickly in the sky, with a few rays of light hitting the tops of the mountains. We watched in stunned silence and amazement, wolfed down our breakfast, grabbed our packs, and headed to the helipad. Once aboard, it took 12 minutes for the helicopter to return to the airport at Pokhara, where we had departed some five days earlier. It was a thrilling 12 minutes, to be sure.



From Pokhara, we caught a flight back to Katmandu, where we had another day of rest and relaxation and exploration, and then flew home. All in all, I give a very hearty two thumbs up to Jiban and his entire crew, as well as Dr. Wohns for establishing the NSF. What a wonderful team and a fantastic experience. I am full of gratitude and appreciation.

A side benefit of traveling courtesy of the Nepal Spine Foundation is the willingness of the doctors to offer a tour of the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital. This hospital is an amazing place. ~~By our standards, it is primitive, but the patient care is real.~~ We had access to the sickest, most injured and most diseased patients in Nepal, and witnessed the care and compassion that they were receiving from the very engaged and committed medical staff. I am willing to wager that very few tourists to Kathmandu ever have an opportunity to view such care.

-Mike Maxwell, JD

2026 NSF Fellow, Sandeep Bohara

March 2026

Dr. Sandeep Bohara Completes his Fellowship with the Nepal Spine Foundation in the United States

Name: Sandeep Bohara

Home Country: Nepal

Fellowship Hospitals: Virginia Mason, NeoSpine, Olympia Orthopaedic Associates, Banner University Medicine and Roper St Francis

U.S. Physicians: Farrokh Farrokhi, MD, Richard Wohns, MD, JD, MBA, Ken Nwosu, MD, MBA, Richard Chua, MD, and Matt Neal, MD

Dr. Sandeep Bohara is a Nepal Spine Foundation Fellowship awardee from Kathmandu, Nepal who is completing his clinical training in the neurosurgery program at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (“TUTH”).

Dr. Bohara’s three week fellowship included observing at five different hospitals and clinics around the U.S. Dr. Bohara began his fellowship with Dr. Farrokh Farrokhi in Seattle at Virginia Mason where he observed various microsurgical techniques. After this, Dr. Bohara spent 1 day at NeoSpine in Puyallup, WA with Dr. Richard Wohns and Dr. Ken Nwosu, then 3 days at Olympia Orthopaedic Associates with Dr. Andrew Manista, followed by 4 days at Banner Health in Tucson, AZ with Dr. Richard Chua. Lastly, Dr. Bohara spent his final 3 days in the U.S. with Dr. Matt Neal in Charleston, SC at Roper St. Francis.

Dr. Bohara reported that his fellowship was, “a fruitful experience. I was able to observe different experiences in the US hospitals and see the latest advances in surgery. I really enjoyed seeing how the hospitals operate and how much easier the surgeries were due to the technology.” Dr. Bohara thanks the Nepal Spine Foundation and all of the hosts in the U.S. He truly appreciated the hospitality shown to him during his stay.



MAY 2026



UPCOMING VOLUNTEER TRIPS & EVENTS:

- Winter volunteer trip to TUTH, Dec 2026
- 2027 Spine Week, April 19-24
- 2027 Spring fundraising trek, TBD

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Please consider donating:
www.nepalspinefoundation.com

Contact Michi Wohns to sign up for the trek or if you are interested in volunteering.