



## **Joe Antcliff**

### **The Barbara Tyldesley Student Award 2017**

Joe Antcliff has just completed his occupational therapy degree at York St John University. Joe chose to undertake his final year clinical placement in Bangladesh with the non-governmental organization, The Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP). Joe spent 12 weeks working at CRP, six weeks in the spinal cord injury (SCI) unit working closely with two patients and six weeks in the outpatient hand therapy unit.

Whilst working in the spinal cord injury unit Joe had daily sessions with two patients. During this time, even with the language barrier, Joe was able to form strong relationships with his patients and gain a deep insight into how their injury impacted them both physically and mentally. Due to the nature of the setting, lack of funding and cultural values, patients had a family member care for them throughout the duration of their stay at CRP. This allowed Joe to gain an understanding of how, in a culture of codependence, a lifelong injury such as a SCI can have a profound impact on not only the patient, but on their family too.

During Joe's time at CRP, he learnt an incredible amount about how occupational therapy can be used in the context of a vastly different culture. Occupational therapy is a profession that reaches across all cultures, demographics, and people. Joe learned how culture and religion, especially, can deeply impact a person's motivation and choice of occupation. Living in a multi-cultural society such as the UK, Joe will be able to use the knowledge and understanding he gained during his time in Bangladesh to ensure he is a more competent and considerate occupational therapist in the future. He now fully understands the importance of considering how a person's culture could impact their participation in an occupation.

Joe feels that the language barrier improved his communication skills. Using signs and single words, Joe had to ensure his instructions and explanations were clear in order to ensure his patient's felt comfortable and confident in his ability as a student. He feels that his observational skills improved, he became more patient and more autonomous. He was not always able to rely on other therapists for answers, therefore he also improved his research skills.

Joe is extremely grateful for being granted The Barbara Tyldesley Award as it enabled him to participate in an international placement, where he learned so much about himself, about healthcare in a developing country and about occupational therapy practice. Joe strongly feels that the experience will make him a more conscientious, considerate and compassionate occupational therapy practitioner.