

## ESMO European Integration Fellowship Report

### Charité Comprehensive Cancer Centrum Berlin

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#### European Integration Fellowship

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#### **Introduction:**

For the past several years working in department for thoracic oncology at the Institute for pulmonary diseases of Vojvodina I have invested all of my personal knowledge, strength and motivation in palliative care of lung cancer patients. I am currently attending specialization in the field of Palliative medicine as one of the physicians in the first class of newly established specialization in Serbia. Palliative care is still an unmet need in Serbia. Luckily awareness of palliative care and the need for palliative medicine specialists is raising. Gaining education is therefore the most essential for me as young palliative medicine resident. It enables me to acquire new knowledge and skills, and most importantly network with more experienced and skilful colleagues in field of palliative medicine from around the world.

Charite Comprehensive Cancer Center (CCCC) in Berlin through a close collaboration and integration of the complete medical, psychological and social care available to patients has a modern approach to treating tumor patients. Organization and coordination of work in all areas of oncology in CCCC with integrated palliative care unit offers interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to diagnosis, therapy, post treatment and end of life care for tumor patients promoting patient focused and family oriented team work. An additional emphasis of the Centre is to offer continual psycho-oncological counselling and care to tumor patients before, during, and after therapy by specially trained professionals. Collaborations and integration of the entire medical care system such as family physicians, specialists, hospitals, psychological and social care centres, self-help groups and hospices with aim to provide long-term care of patients suffering from tumor and gives support for family members during disease and after death is the main goal of all employees. Therefore my choice for Integration Fellowship was CCCC.

#### **Main part:**

During my 6-weeks visit in CCCC Campus Virchow-Klinikum I learned not just how a palliative care unit is structured and integrated into oncology department and into ambulatory palliative care but also how it cooperates with other units and centres. Beside this I learned how maximum symptom control and quality of life can be improved but also how quality of dying can be achieved. I also gained experience concerning the decision making about adequate diagnostic and therapeutic measures in palliative medicine. I was actively involved in everyday practice and actively participated in all meetings discussing palliative research

and research cooperation possibilities with my home institution. In Palliative unit I was involved in morning meetings with entire department, consultant word rounds, journal club, ethical case discussions, daily word rounds, patient admission and discharge, meeting with patient family and caregivers. Working together with physicians, nurses, social workers, psycho-oncologist and other medical and non-medical staff in Palliative unit I have learned the importance of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary team work in order to provide the best possible quality of life for patients and their family. I had the opportunity to discuss individual approach to each patient in Palliative unit and find out the best possible solution for resolving patient's burden.

**Conclusion:**

The experience in Campus Virchows Palliative Care Unit and gained knowledge will influence my further work in improving palliative approach in my home institution. During my visit I strengthened my competences in palliative care management and teamwork which I can apply in my everyday work in order to increase quality of treatment for lung cancer patients.

**Acknowledgements:**

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Dr. med. Tomi Kovačević