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ESMO Clinical Unit Visit Report

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CLINICAL UNIT VISIT TO THE GASTROINTESTINAL UNIT

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The Royal Marsden Gastrointestinal (GI) and lymphoma unit is one of the leading centres for cancer care in Europe while also promoting high impact clinical and translational research. Given my particular interest in gastrointestinal cancer, the opportunity to learn from an experienced team in a unit with state-of-the-art facilities for treatment and research posed as an important asset not only individually but also for the team I am a part of.

The GI and lymphoma unit operates in two centres, both in Chelsea and Sutton and features a multidisciplinary team of medical oncologists, clinical oncologists, upper and lower GI surgeons, gastroenterologists, radiologists, pathologists and specialist nurses.

During my stay I had the opportunity to closely work with the GI Unit team both in the clinical setting and in different research projects.

Clinically, it was particularly relevant to experience working in a different health care system, with different assets and challenges. The opportunity to observe and discuss clinical cases with experts in the field was incredibly enriching. The multidisciplinary meetings, although a standard of care all over the world, are in fact held in a very different way in different centres and were not only an opportunity to acquire knowledge but also to realize what we already do proficiently and what could be improved in my home institution.

The unit also held weekly teaching sessions for specialist registrars with a senior consultant which further allowed me to exchange experiences, discuss state of the art treatment and consolidate knowledge in different subjects.

During my stay I was also able to observe the clinical research structure and to participate in the research clinics as well as research meetings.

One of my main goals was to further develop my knowledge and gain experience in the research field. During my stay, I was able to observe and participate in the early steps of the implementation of a clinical trial, as I accompanied the early discussions regarding its implementation.

I was also included in other translational research projects. I collaborated in a study which aimed to characterise the molecular predictors of outcome in pancreatic cancer patients. This was a single centre study which aimed to describe the incidence and distribution of tumour biomarkers in patients treated for pancreatic adenocarcinoma and for whom tumour tissue was available for analysis; it focused on patients treated with curative surgery for early stage disease. I was also included in another single centre retrospective translational study, which aimed to characterise molecular predictors of response to anti EGFR agents in patients with colorectal cancer.

Being a part of these projects was an enriching experience, as I was able to contact with several aspects of translational research in another facility such as protocol writing, database design, collection and retrieving data in different platforms. The results obtained in one of these projects originated an abstract which was submitted to the ASCO GI meeting 2018.


My clinical unit visit to the GI and lymphoma unit at the Royal Marsden was definitely an enriching experience both clinically, personally and research-wise.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Naureen Starling for all the support and effort put into adapting the clinical unit visit to my needs and expectations. Also Francesco Sciafani, Kate Young, Elisa Fontana and Gayathri Anandappa for all their time and help during these 3 months. I would also like to thank Dr. Ian Chau, all the research fellows, specialist registrars, Pamela Baptiste and Sarah Johnson for all their time and support, even in the busiest days.

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