



European Society for Medical Oncology

ESMO Clinical Unit Visit Report

Department of Oncology at Institute Jules Bordet, Brussels, Belgium

16 February – 27 March 2015

Aim of visit was to gain insight into translational research in Oncology



Fellow: Sofia Levva, Theagenion Cancer Hospital of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

Mentors: Papakotoulas Pavlos, Makrantonakis Parisis,

Department of Oncology, Theagenion Cancer Hospital of Thessaloniki

I had the opportunity to visit the Oncology Department of Jules Bordet Institute in the frame of a Clinical Unit Visit Fellowship sponsored by ESMO between 16th of February and 27th of March. As a resident at Theagenion Cancer Hospital in 2014, I have been strongly interested in human cancer translational research and clinical trials in oncology. During my postgraduate studies I have been trained in laboratory techniques, and also completed courses in biostatistics, molecular medicine, communication skills, etc. On the other hand, working as a resident in a Cancer Hospital, enabled me to familiarize with therapeutic protocols, chemotherapy toxicity, emergencies in Oncology and Hematology and various interventional

techniques. My growing interest in human cancer translational research and breast cancer prompted me to opt for Jules Bordet Institute.

During my stay there I had the opportunity to attend the treatment of many cancer patients from different countries in a very well organized institute. I visited the different oncology clinics and got knowledge of their organization and daily function. Among them I attended the daily program of the Palliative Care Clinic, Medical Oncology Clinics and the Day Clinic. Day clinic admits about 90 patients daily. Its team constituted of a supervisor medical oncologist, assistant doctors, nurses, secretary and clinical pharmacists who perform the regimens dilutions. Furthermore, I attended different consultations with specialist doctors (Dr. Kerger, Dr 't Kint, Dr. Lebrun, Dr Aftimos, Dr. Gombos, Dr. de Azambuja, Dr Aoun, Dr dal Lago, Dr Lalami, Dr Klastersky, Dr Awada, Dr Lossignol, Dr Sotiriou, Dr. Ignatiadis and Dr Gil. There was a wide range of patients with different malignancies both treated with chemotherapy and under follow up. Moreover, I attended multidisciplinary teams where cases of patients with breast cancer, gynecological cancers, gastrointestinal tumors, genitourinary tumors and sarcomas were presented. What I found very useful, was the geriatric assessment that is being held in elderly patients by specialist doctors, as well as the genetic counseling consultations. Both were quite new to me, as these specialties (e.g. geriatrics, genetics) do not exist in Greece.

This visit gave me the unique opportunity to visit BrEAST, which is an organization which conducts clinical trials in breast cancer adjuvant setting. Dr Azim Hatem presented to me the institution, its main goals, operating principles, field of activities and job opportunities. Not to forget, I observed some very interesting clinical trial presentations, and had the chance to discuss with Dr Aftimos the frame in which clinical trials are being conducted, especially phase I studies. Additionally, during my visit Nuclear Medicine Department, I had the opportunity to visit the radioisotope therapies department and the PET/CT department. Dr Skarfis presented me the therapies provided by the department and I was able to watch one therapy of this kind in a female patient with NET in breast. Dr Artigas presented to me the PSMA-PET/CT which is applied in cases of restaging for CRPC.

Last but not least, meeting with Professor Martine Piccart was more than inspiring, as she is not only an excellent doctor and professor, but also an amazing personality. She is the most suitable paradigm of a leader who respect his/her team and recognizes the value of networking.

Since my educational visit at Jules Bordet I can better appreciate the value of translational research and the utmost need for that. I can also see that the only successful way to treat cancer and

manage cancer patients is through individualized medicine, namely different approaches for some elderly people and taking careful family history to detect hereditary syndromes.

For all these reasons I would like to thank ESMO for this great and unique opportunity that broadened both my medical and personal horizons. I strongly recommend Clinical Unit Visit to every young oncologist.

28/08/2015, Thessaloniki

Sofia Levva, MD, MSc, PhD Candidate

The ESMO Clinical Unit Visit Fellowships are supported by an Educational Grant from

