

ESMO European Integration Fellowship Report

Institute Gustave Roussy
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Clinical and research fellowship in the Department of Gynaecological cancer

Fellow: Paul Kubelac, The Oncology Institute „Prof. Dr. Ion Chiricuță”, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Mentor(s): Alexandra Leary
Department of Gynaecological cancer, Institute Gustave Roussy

Finding out about this career development programme, I was excited to see that ESMO shortened the gap between Eastern European countries and state of the art Cancer Centres across Europe. One may argue that there is a limited number of fellowships available, but the impact of such a programme extends beyond the individual, through the knowledge he or she can accumulate and disseminate with fellow colleagues. Surely, it would be impossible to translate decades of experience and knowledge but such an experience can definitely establish standards one would like to pursue.

I choose Gustave Roussy due to its reputation as a world leading centre that unites patients care, research and teaching in the fight against cancer. My aims where to gain insight into oncology care and translational research, with an emphasis on gynaecologic oncology and ovarian cancer.

During my six weeks stay, Dr Alexandra Leary helped me to fully integrate me into the Department`s routine activities, maximizing my experience within this high-volume centre. Hence, I was actively involved in the outpatient clinic twice a week where I could see and discuss a wide variety of gynaecological malignancies. My clinical experience was also enriched by attending the weekly inpatient rounds, clinical trials and drug development meetings, MDT meetings, and I also had the chance to participate at the post-Chicago ASCO conference.

I consider this state-of-the-art experience as a reference point to which I will always aspire and improve on at my home institute but also as an experience that engages one individual to pursue other international collaborations throughout his career path.

In the laboratory I had the chance to work together with Dr Alexandra Leary`s wonderful research team on several bench to bedside research projects focused on ovarian cancer that also were of great importance to my PhD project. During the lab meetings I had the opportunity to present and critically appraise my weekly progress on the research topics I was assigned. Our collaboration still continues well after the end of the fellowship, and crystalized into an original research presented at the 2018 SGO meeting and another full text paper is underway.

The opportunity to experience an environment that promotes cutting edge treatment and research during my 6-week visit to this great Institute was definitely an enriching experience for my current professional endeavours. Given the multidisciplinary treatment of cancer and the speed of changes within this field, personally I would encourage every young aspiring oncologist to apply for such a programme in a leading cancer Institute, for a career changing experience.

I would like to thank Dr Alexandra Leary for all the support put into adapting this visit to my needs and expectations and to her team full of great people and I hope that this fellowship will be the basis for future successful collaborations.

Cluj Napoca, Romania

Paul Kubelac