

ESMO Clinical Unit Visit Report

Institut Gustave Roussy 21st May- 29th June 2018 Breast Cancer Unit

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Mentor(s): Professor Fabrice André
Breast Cancer Unit

This year during the months of May and June I had the opportunity to enjoy and ESMO Clinical Unit Visit at the Breast Cancer Unit of the Institut Gustave Roussy at Villejuif, close to Paris.

In the past, since I was a fellow in Medical Oncology I have done other similar Clinical Unit Visits in New York, Mexico City and Stockholm, and in all of them I have always learnt so much about other ways of working in Oncology in different teams and countries, so anytime I have a chance like that, I try to take a break from my routine and go abroad to keep on learning and seeing how other Oncology Units work worldwide. For the last 14 years, I have mainly seen Breast and Gynecological cancer patients, so for me it was important to choose my fellowship in a Breast Cancer Unit famous for its Clinical Research activities, that is why I chose the Breast Cancer Unit at the Institut Gustave Roussy. The goal of my visit was mainly to see how this well-known Breast Cancer Unit works, its organization and how the Clinical Research Program takes place.

During the six weeks of the ESMO Clinical Unit Visit I had the opportunity to experience all this. I will explain my weekly program. On Monday, I attended the Breast Cancer "Fast Diagnosis" Unit in which the patients with an abnormal image at the mammogram, breast ultrasound or abnormal physical exam exploration were visited early in the morning and underwent a cytology or biopsy of the breast nodule or mass and abnormal axillary or peripheral lymph nodes if needed. In the afternoon, the patient was visited again by the same oncologist and was informed about the pathology result and a treatment plan was explained to the patient, all in just one day.

On Wednesday, from 8.30 till 12.30h I attended the Breast Cancer Multidisciplinary meeting in which all the cases of recent diagnosis, after neoadjuvant treatment or if needed new change of line of therapy were decided. It was a very intensive meeting, driven in an optimal and efficient way by medical oncologists, medical radiotherapists, breast cancer pathologists, breast cancer surgeons, radiologists and clinical research nurses.

The rest of the week I attended the Breast Cancer Clinic mainly with Dr. Barbara Pistilli, Dr. Suzette Delaloge, Dr. Andrea Varga and Dr. Fabrice André while they visited the Breast Cancer patients.

On Monday afternoon, I attended a meeting held by Dr. Barbara Pistilli and Dr. Andrea Varga about an interesting project in Clinical Research about Breast Cancer patients and targeted therapies.

Everyday from 13 till 14h pm I also attended the fellows educational meeting in which many different Medical Oncology subjects were discussed from: bibliography reviews of recent publications, talks about management of any kind of cancer,...

I had also the chance to attend an innovative and interesting Immunotherapy Toxicities Multidisciplinary Session that was hold every fortnight in which medical oncologists, pulmonologists, nephrologists, dermatologists,... tried to solve the clinical doubts and management about cancer patients treated with immunotherapy from all over France who had suffered serious or unusual toxicities.

In my experience, the major take-home lessons were; first that nowadays in medical oncologists we should work subspecialized in different cancers organized in teams in which medical oncologists, medical radiotherapists, breast cancer pathologists, breast cancer surgeons, radiologists, clinical research nurses, psicooncologists...and other roles should work tightly together; second, that having an innovative Clinical and Translational Research Program in a Breast Cancer Unit gives the chance to the patients to choose the optimal treatment and to be treated with the most innovative drugs, based on their immunoistochemical and/or genomic profile, that is why re-biopsy of patients is so important if feasible.

I would like to implement a similar Clinical Research Program in Breast Cancer in my Cancer Center in order to offer the best treatment to the breast cancer patients.

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