

ESMO Clinical Unit Visit Report

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust
Downs Road, Sutton
London, UK

02 May 2016 – 15 June 2016

Clinical visit in Uro-oncology Unit

Fellow: Margaret Ottaviano, MD, Medical Oncologist in training

Home Institute: University of Naples Federico II, Department of Clinical Medicine and Surgery, Rare Tumours Reference Center (CRTR), Medical Oncology Unit

Mentor: Dr. Alison Reid, MD, PhD, Medical Oncologist Consultant, Uro-oncological Unit

Host Institute: The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, Uro-oncological Unit, Sutton UK

I would like to start my visit report thanking the ESMO and my mentor Dr. Alison Reid, for the amazing experience I lived. Having looked through the great opportunities offered by ESMO, I was very delighted to have the chance to spend six weeks, from the 2nd of May until the 15th of June 2016, learning/working at the Uro-oncology Unit of the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust.

I am currently enrolled in Residency of Medical Oncology by University of Naples Federico II, focusing my clinical and research activities mainly on rare solid tumours of adults, with a special attention to germ cell cancer. As medical oncologist in training, I applied for this programme because I was sure it would have strongly enriched my person, giving me the opportunity to get in touch with the British welfare and to deep my knowledge about the management of urological malignancies, and so it has been. The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, in fact, is a large, world-leading cancer centre and the Academic Uro-oncology Unit is one of the largest in the hospital, with a high throughput of patients for prostate, bladder and, of course, germ cell cancers. Moreover, this unit has contributed to the prostate cancer trials, leading to the approval of agents such as abiraterone acetate, enzalutamide, cabazitaxel and radium, treating patients through all phases of prostate cancer from early stage disease, receiving potentially curative treatments, through to castration-resistant prostate cancer (CRPC) and similarly, offering several trials of radiotherapy and immunotherapy for bladder cancer treatment. Last, but not least, the germ cell cancer unit is a Supranetwork centre, which means that a significant number of “poor prognosis” and relapsed germ cell cancers patients, is taken in charge and treated, where indicated, with high dose chemotherapy and stem cell transplantation. The unit has also a collegiate approach for managing these patients, therefore management decisions are made in multidisciplinary meetings and clinical review meetings, where all members of the team can contribute to the discussion. My Home Institute has

known to be a reference center in Italy for the treatment of male germ cell cancer, being one of the most active and propositive center, especially for research activities, of the Italian Germ Cell Cancer Group (IGG). As direct consequence, since I was only a med student, I interacted with young patients affected by this rare tumour, knowing and sharing their fears and doubts. Despite the high cure rate achievable at the first diagnosis for the “good prognosis” patients, future perspectives become more difficult for patients who relapse or with initial “poor prognosis”. My desire to discover new strategies of treatment, to improve my existing skills, to provide the best possible therapy for germ cell cancer patients in my Home institute, and to carry on all this in a multi-cultural environment, interacting daily with young oncology trainees coming from every part of the world, led me to the Royal Marsden.

Under the great supervision of Dr. Alison Reid, who has never failed to lend her support, my weekly programme was detailed as above listed, sharing journal club and teaching sessions, in addition to the informal teaching in clinics and on the ward, with Prof. David Dearnaley, Dr Chris Parker, Prof. Robert Huddart, Dr Alison Tree and Dr Gert Attard.

Day	AM	PM
Monday	Journal club; Ward round	Project time
Tuesday	Trainee-led teaching; Project time	Pre-clinic meeting; Bladder clinic
Wednesday	Germ cell cancer (GCC) MDT; prostate clinical review meeting	Pre-clinic meeting; Prostate clinic
Thursday	Ward round; mentor catch-up time	Castration resistant prostate cancer (CRPC) radiology meeting; CRPC clinic
Friday	Urology MDT; GCC clinic	Consultant-led teaching; project time

Moreover, enthusiastically and meaningfully, I have been involved in two data collection projects about prostate cancer. The first project involved examining whether a reinduction of response to abiraterone is evident on switching a patient’s steroids from prednisone to dexamethasone. The second project assessed whether patients were becoming hypoadrenal on abruptly stopping prednisone at the end of docetaxel chemotherapy treatment. I also assisted Dr. Reid in my principal project about germ cell cancer. My role consisted of identifying relapsed/ refractory patients attending the germ cell clinic to collect plasma samples in an attempt to understand at a molecular level what is driving resistance to chemotherapy. I also assisted the data managers in maintaining the database of samples taken during my 6-week period at Marsden. In collaboration with a laboratory in the Institute of Cancer Research, adjacent to the Royal Marsden, nucleic acid studies will be conducted on these samples. Thanks to this opportunity I appreciated the translational aspects of clinical research, bringing the acquired knowledge at my Home Institute. In 16 December 2016, in fact, during the congress “Health and environment: new updates in testicular germ tumors”, which will take place at University of Naples Federico II, it will be a great honour to guess as speakers Prof. R. Huddart and Dr. A. Patrikidou, great expert opinion leaders in this field, who I

had the pleasure to meet during my ESMO visit in Marsden. I hope this will be only the first step of a long collaboration.

I would like to conclude my report thanking all the staff and patients I met in Sutton, who were always friendly and courteous, Prof. Giovannella Palmieri and Prof. S. De Placido of my Home Institute for their support, Dr. Pasquale Rescigno who encourage me to apply, and of course a special thanks goes to Dr. Alison Reid and ESMO for giving me this great opportunity for my future career as medical oncologist specialized in urogenital neoplasms and rare cancers.



Sutton, UK 15 June 2016

Margaret Ottaviano

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