

ESMO Clinical Unit Visit Report

Intitut Jules Bordet
Brussels, Belgium

01-May-2017 – 31-Jul-2017

Clinical Unit Visit at Institut Jules Bordet/APT/CTSU

Fellow: Arlindo R. Ferreira, from Hospital de Santa Maria, Centro Hospitalar Lisboa Norte, Lisbon, Portugal

Mentor(s): Evandro de Azambuja, MD, PhD
Medical Oncology and Clinical Trials Support Unit/Academic Promoting Team

Institut Jules Bordet is a leading cancer institute in Europe. IJB contributes daily to the care of a large group of patients with breast cancer and other tumours. At the same time, IJB also meaningfully contributes for the implementation and conduction of ground-breaking studies in the field of breast cancer and to the creation of clinical research infrastructure throughout Europe. As a matter of fact, Bordet had a strong impact in the creation and establishment of the Breast International Group (BIG), a recognized cooperative group that aims at improving breast cancer research and care in the world. The engaging ecosystem of IJB is indissociable of its professionals. The fact that Dr Evandro de Azambuja was available to mentor me during this fellowship was a major reason to apply to this institution, given his strong involvement in the care of patients with breast cancer, but also his deep involvement in the design and conduct of major clinical trials in the field of breast cancer.

During my stay at IJB I participated in the APT/CTSU (ex-BrEAST data centre) scientific activities, as well as in the ongoing continuous education sessions, research meetings and clinical tumour boards. I worked under Dr Evandro de Azambuja direct supervision and in close collaboration with all the staff from APT/CTSU. I was involved from the very first day in the design and subsequent study procedures of several retrospective cohort studies, but also in the design of a meta-analysis and the discussion of the design of a clinical trial. I further had the opportunity to get hands on in performing independent data analysis and in writing an original research manuscript. At the clinical tumour board, I got involved in the discussion of particularly challenging clinical cases. This experience was interesting from two perspectives, both by improving my understanding of breast cancer management by seeing how several experts frame certain clinical problems, but also by understanding how the multidisciplinary meetings are organized. Both these 2 points add to my experience and will be of value at my local institution and future career.

It was especially rewarding to be seamlessly included in the ongoing projects of the institution, discuss several projects with committed experts and observe the professional organizational structure of APT/CTSU, namely the interplay of professionals from regulation, statistics, study coordination, as well as monitors.

Integrating APT/CTSU team was a strong and motivating experience. I improved both my clinical and research skills in the field of breast cancer. Specifically, it improved my understanding of certain biologic underpinnings of breast cancer, clinical management of the disease, but also helped me to mature my epidemiologic, statistical and regulatory understanding of clinical research. With this experience I feel more confident and empowered to provide good clinical care to breast cancer patients, but also to conduct independent research and to strength my local research infrastructure.

I would like to thank Dr Evandro de Azambuja for all the energy he allocated in adapting this experience to my needs and expectations, but also for all the friendship. Also, I would like to thank Matteo Lambertini, Christian Maurer, Samuel Martel, Noam Pondé, Frederic Henot, Georges El Hachem and Christiane Jungles for their friendship, help and time during my stay at IJB.

Lisbon, 23-Nov-2018


Arlindo R. Ferreira


Evandro de Azambuja

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

