

ESMO Clinical Unit Visit Report

EPaS group, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland

03.09.2018-14.10.2018

Supportive Care Research Unit Visit at University of Edinburgh

Fellow: Dr. Brocco Davide, University of L'Aquila- SS Annunziata Hospital, Chieti, Italy

Mentor(s): Dr. Barry Laird
EPaS Group, University of Edinburgh

I am a resident in medical oncology in my fourth year of training. During my residency I gained an interest in supportive care and cancer nutrition, particularly cancer cachexia.

The fellowship was designed to gain competence and experience in this field of cancer care and investigation. To this end I contacted a senior lecturer and international leader for palliative and supportive cancer research, Dr. Barry Laird, and asked to attend his research department.

Dr Laird is also based within the Edinburgh Cancer Centre which is a regional cancer centre serving a population of 1.5 million people. By combining this research attachment with a clinical component this would enable me to improve my clinical competences in medical oncology focusing in particular to acquire further training in diagnosis, staging and management of cancer patients' symptoms. An additional aim was keeping in contact with a different health and hospital system.

During the fellowship I worked closely with Dr Laird during his research work. My main activity was to produce a post-hoc analysis of two phase III clinical trials in collaboration with him. These trials studied the role of an antibody anti-IL1 alpha in improving Lean Body Mass and Quality of Life in advanced colorectal cancer patients. This part of the fellowship has been an outstanding moment for me to gain skills in statistical analysis of medical clinical trials and particularly to understand how to lead scientific research in supportive cancer care.

From the second week of the fellowship, I also attended clinical sessions in the Edinburgh Cancer Centre. In particular, I attended the outpatient lung and upper GI cancer clinics and the respective multidisciplinary team meetings. This was a great opportunity for me to learn a different approach to cancer care; compared with my usual practice and current training. This contact with a different health care system has incredibly enriched me in the way I lead cancer patient communication in a fair and empathetic manner. It has also been an opportunity to see how to organise an efficient cancer care system where different specialists (medical doctors, nurses, healthcare assistant, etc.) are coordinated to totally support cancer patients.

In conclusion being awarded this fellowship has been a great experience for my professional growth and career. I have definitely improved my research and clinical abilities, whilst as a bonus I have refined my scientific writing skills in English.

I strongly believe that these skills and experience acquired during the fellowship will be useful to promote independent research in my institution and to actively encourage scientific collaborations. Indeed, I am now part of a large international clinical trial which has been as a direct result of this fellowship and together with my mentor we are writing a paper reporting the results of the post-hoc analysis performed during the fellowship. The paper is aiming to be ready for submission in April 2019.

I would like to conclude thanking Dr. Barry Laird, for all his support and effort in helping me during this fellowship, ESMO, for the fundamental financial help, and from my home institute Professor Clara Natoli.

Chieti, 11/11/2018

Dr. Brocco Davide

Dr. Barry Laird

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