

## ESMO European Integration Fellowship Report

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust  
London, United Kingdom

1<sup>st</sup> of May 2017 – 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2017

### Observership and training in treatment of melanoma, kidney and gynaecological cancers

**Fellow:** Anu Planken, North-Estonian Medical Centre, Estonia

**Mentor(s):** Dr. James Larkin, Professor Martin Gore  
Melanoma, kidney and gynecological cancer unit

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**Introduction:** I aspire to maximally educate and develop myself during my residency, and thus I started looking for further possibilities of advanced training in a leading cancer competence center in Europe. I am deeply interested in understanding and implementing the modern molecular diagnostic and therapeutic methods in the practice of oncology, and due to my research background in melanoma I was particularly interested in finding a center with extensive experience in melanoma, both from the clinical and research aspect. Conveniently ESMO had launched the European Integration Fellowship program and I was happy to be selected for the 6-week training at The Royal Marsden Hospital in London.

**Main part:** My training took place under the guidance of consultant Dr. James Larkin and Prof. Martin Gore, who lead the unit of melanoma, kidney and gynecological cancer at the Royal Marsden. The team also included 3 other consultants Dr. Lisa Pickering, Dr. Samra Turajlic and Dr. Susana Banerjee. A central role in patient management at this center is performed by specialist registrars and specialist nurses, under the supervision of consultants. The clinical part of my schedule consisted of daily clinical rounds in the wards, participation in specialized clinics of either melanoma/renal cancers or gynecological cancers, where the whole team managed about 30-40 patient visits in a half-day clinic. In addition, twice a week I attended the drug/chemotherapy clinic where the registrars evaluated patients and prescribed various treatments. As the melanoma and renal cancers are the two cancer types where the progress in regard to novel treatments, including immunotherapies and targeted therapies, has been the most rapid, it was exciting to experience and learn from the experts the nuances for these novel therapies both in regard to treatment and adverse event management. For me especially educational was the monthly special meeting in regard to immune related adverse events, where all complicated cases were discussed from the whole hospital with various experts participating.

In addition, the center is one of the world leading in clinical and translation studies of novel drugs and molecular diagnostics. Every week there were several research meetings where all the ongoing and novel studies and patients were discussed with the research team members. At the time there were around 20 ongoing various studies in regard to melanoma and renal cancer at the unit, for several of which the Royal Marsden was the initiator and the consultants the primary investigators. I additionally participated in other multidisciplinary meetings for different cancer types when possible, and also attended various lectures at the nearby Institute of Cancer Research and the Francis Crick Institute.

**Conclusion:** The Royal Marsden is certainly one of the most prestigious cancer centers in Europe and it was enlightening to see the running of a world-leading cancer center from the inside, both from the daily clinical practice and the cutting-edge research side. All of the newest clinical advances are rapidly integrated in this center and due to high patient numbers there is vast expertise in regard to both patient and adverse event management of these novel therapies. I have started to utilize the lessons I learned during this training in my daily practice at home. In addition, it was interesting for me to observe how research is integrated with the clinical work from every aspect and how the center is setup to provide the patients with clinical trial options once standard treatment-lines have been exhausted. Observing how the consultants efficiently integrated both clinical and research work, I rediscovered my optimism to lead my future career as a physician-researcher in oncology. I also gained many new ideas for continuing my own research projects in regard to melanoma translational studies.

In conclusion my training at the Royal Marsden was exceptional and I am thankful for ESMO for providing me with this opportunity. The whole process and details of my visit were well supported and I would like to especially thank Lone Kristoffersen for her contribution. I highly respect that ESMO provides such high-level opportunities and support for training of young oncologists from all over Europe!

