

## **A report on the ESMO Palliative Care Observation Fellowship**

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**Host Institution: Department of Oncology, Hospital Arnau de Vilanova, Valencia, Spain**

Between the 4th of April and the 10th of June 2016, I realized the ESMO Palliative Care Observation Fellowship in the Department of Oncology at the Hospital Arnau de Vilanova in Valencia, Spain. This Department of Oncology is one of the ESMO Designed Centres of Integrated Oncology and Palliative Care. During the fellowship, I had a chance to observe and participate in the work of the doctors in the ward, in the ambulatory clinic, the Chemotherapy Day Unit and also once a week to participate in the meetings of the Palliative Care Committee that consists of oncologists (who coordinate the work of the Committee), psychologist, professionals from the *Unidad de Hospitalización a Domicilio* (Home Hospice Care Unit), coordinating nurses and social assistant. The role of this Committee is to plan and provide a comprehensive palliative care for cancer patients and their families. This includes palliative care realized at patients homes by the *Unidad de Hospitalización a Domicilio* with a strict collaboration with the oncologists working in the hospital and the option of hospitalization in the Department of Oncology when indicated.

The fact that this Department provides both active oncology treatment and palliative care for cancer patients implies that patients are being treated, followed up and advised in the majority of cases by a treating oncologist, which constitutes the basis for the trust between the doctors, the patients and the patients' families, so important in the concept of “*continuum of care*” in oncology. Therefore, patients can be sure they will be taken care of by a doctor who knows them and their disease very well.

It is important to underlie that during the fellowship I met wonderful doctors whose commitment, empathy and professionalism constitute the basis for this wonderful Centre of Integrated Oncology and Palliative Care. They are (in alphabetical order): Dr. Ana Albert, Dr. Enrique Cabrera, Dr. Juan Manuel Campos, Dr. Vincente Carañana, Dr. Jose Garcia, Dr. Javier Garde, Dr. Antonio Llombart, Dr. Nuria Peira, the residents: Dr. Rene Albino, Dr. Julia Hidalgo and Dr. Beatriz Honrubia. And the psychologist, Ana Fortea, who was always ready to provide a psychological support for the patients and their families whenever they needed it. All of them made me feel always welcomed in the Department and shared their professional experience and knowledge with me. Therefore, I would like to thank them all, and especially to my direct tutor Dr. Enrique Cabrera, for making my stay in the Department an unforgettable professional and social experience.

The stay in the Department let me improve my knowledge in the palliative care of cancer patients, especially I was able to observe how to provide a holistic care and support to cancer patients and how to integrate palliative care into the active cancer treatment. I am convinced that this experience will be of magnitude importance in my everyday work as a medical oncologist and definitely I would like to incorporate some of the solutions into my home institution.

At the end, I would like to thank ESMO for the exceptional opportunities it provides to young oncologists and to Roche, the sponsor of the 2015 ESMO Palliative Care Fellowships.

Definitely, I recommend everyone the ESMO Palliative Care Observation Fellowship in general and the Department of Oncology at the Hospital Arnau de Vilanova in Valencia in particular for this Fellowship.

Sebastian Ochenduszo