



GOOD SCIENCE
BETTER MEDICINE
BEST PRACTICE

ESMO Clinical Unit Visit Report

Host institute:

Champalimaud Clinical Centre, Portugal

Fellowship dates:

2 September – 11 October 2019

Fellowship title:

Breast Medical Oncology Training at the Breast Unit of the Champalimaud Cancer Centre



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Introduction and purpose of the Clinical Unit Visit

The Champalimaud Clinical Centre (CCC) is a state-of-the art medical facility for management of oncologic, neuropsychiatric and related diseases. Its core mission is the provision of premier patient management supported by programmes of translational research. CCC aims to personalise therapy and improve clinical outcomes and quality of life.

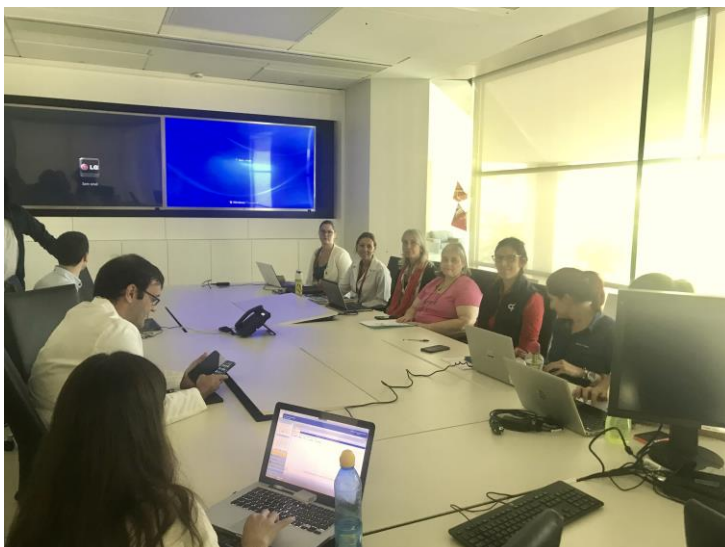
The Champalimaud Clinical Centre Breast Unit was launched in 2011 under the Direction of Dr. Fatima Cardoso and is managing around 1500 new breast cancer patients of all stages. Multidisciplinary meetings are held every week in the Breast Unit for treatment decisions, and consultations are shared between specialists whenever necessary. In the multidisciplinary meeting, besides the members of the Breast Unit, which includes medical oncologists, breast surgeons, plastic surgeons, radiotherapist, radiologist, pathologist and specialised nurses, they count also on the participation of nuclear medicine specialist, psycho-oncologists, nutritionists, geneticists and palliative care specialists.

The training goals of my Clinical Unit Visit focused on the multidisciplinary treatment of breast cancer, including diagnosis process, oncological management, and surgery.



Six-week timetable

During the six weeks of the programme I was actively involved in the daily clinical practice and treatment process which lead to the high quality of patient care. Breast cancer consultations were conducted with patients in all stages of breast cancer by several medical oncologists specialised in breast cancer. On Tuesdays, I observed consultations with breast surgeon who planned surgical procedures and operations for the patients. On Wednesdays, I attended planning of Breast Radiotherapy treatments on the Radiology Oncology Department. Later, I joined the Scientific Meeting where all breast management team had educational seminars on different topics, such as, patient education on immune-therapy. Once in a week on the same day I joined a multidisciplinary oncological team (MDT) meeting, where all disciplines of Breast Cancer Unit team participated. This multidisciplinary team discussion was conducted on ongoing patient from the unit and lead to a comprehensive approach in treatment planning. On Thursdays, I participated in Journal Club where different interesting articles and ESMO conference highlights were discussed among the group. Breast imaging included observation of breast ultrasound, ultrasound guided core needle biopsy and vacuum-assisted breast biopsy with stereotactic mammography. Attending the day hospital with the medical oncologist who was on call introduced me the organisation as well as the role of the medical oncologist in that department.



Expected transferable skills on return to home institute

During my stay in the unit I understood the crucial importance of multidisciplinary care for the management of breast cancer care in all stages including advanced disease and attended all MDT meetings taking place during the stay. I understand the setup and organisation of a Certified Breast Unit. With the attendance of the different out-patient consultations (medical, radiation and surgical oncology) I understand the specificities of each and their role in breast cancer patient care. While attending the Breast Imaging services, I have observed all available techniques including breast interventional radiology, and understood their indications. I accompanied the Medical Oncologist who was on call for the Day Hospital and understand the organization of the Day Hospital as well as the role of the Medical Oncologist in this Department. I have interacted with all members of the Breast Unit including Breast Nurses and understood their crucial role. I become familiar with the inclusion of the patients in clinical trials.

Conclusion and acknowledgements

This Clinical Unit Visit gave me the chance to improve my knowledge about breast cancer at a world-recognised top cancer centre. I do think this opportunity will influence my future work as medical oncologist. I am glad for new friendships.

I really want to thank Dr. Fatima Cardoso for teaching me precision and devotion to this work. Also, I would like to thank all the Breast Cancer Unit for making me part of the team, Dr. Bearta Sousa, Dr. Joana Ribeiro, Dr. Helena Gouveina, Dr. Arlindo Ferreira, and Dr. Maria Joao Cardoso for inviting me in the breast consultations, their help and time. Last but not least I would like to thank ESMO for giving me this great opportunity.

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