

ESMO Integration Fellowship Report

Host institute:

The Comprehensive Cancer Center Ulm (CCCU)

Fellowship dates:

01 October – 12 November 2021

Fellowship title:

Multidisciplinary approach in the treatment of patients with hematology malignancies.

Fellow: Narmin Talibova

National Oncology Center

Mentor: Prof. Dr. H. Dohner

Deputy director, Comprehensive Cancer Center

Medical Director, Department of Internal Medicine III

Introduction and purpose of the European Integration Fellowship

ESMO Integration Fellowship is an excellent opportunity for oncologists from developing countries to spend time at a leading cancer center in Europe. I applied for the Charite Comprehensive Cancer Center fellowship when I first learned about it. After being selected, I started to learn the German language. Unfortunately, my fellowship was postponed due to the COVID pandemic. During my master's at Ulm University, I was impressed with the hematology-oncology specialization in the Comprehensive Cancer Center Ulm (CCCU), which encouraged me to improve my knowledge in this field. Unfortunately, hematology-oncology is the problematic area of oncology in my country. And I did not have many opportunities to enhance my understanding during a residency on it. I was honored that Prof. Dohner accepted me to the fellowship at the Internal Medicine III department of CCCU. I am grateful for ESMO that they allowed me to start ESMO Integration Fellowship at CCCU, and I was able to begin my fellowship this year. CCCU is one of the reference centers in Germany for hematology-oncology. Visiting the CCCU under the supervision of an international expert in leukemia such as Prof. Dohner was a unique opportunity to increase my knowledge in that field, connecting the research to everyday clinical practice.

During my stay at the CCCU, I was involved in the daily clinical practice with AML, ALL, MM, lymphomas patients under the supervision of Dr. Verena Gaidzik and Dr. Frank Stegelmann. Twice a week, I participate in the visit with Prof. Dohner. Many patients were treated in the clinical trials, which helped me to learn about the coordination of clinical trials in everyday work with the patients.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, I attended the tumor board, which discussed various ontological patients and made treatment decisions with a multidisciplinary team, including pathologist, radiologist, medical clinical oncologist. It helped me improve my practical skills by observing and learning from all the clinical case discussions.

I was also impressed by the molecular tumor board, which was a new experience translating molecular understanding into clinical practice, improving my precision medicine knowledge.

I had a chance to be involved in autologous and allogeneic transplantation and CART cell therapy and get experience in managing complications. Many of these treatments are not yet available in my country, so it was beneficial to see them daily.

I also had rotation in the medical oncological day clinic, which helped me see patients with broad spectrum of other malignancies, improve my knowledge on their treatment, and learn about the structure of the day clinic. I was delighted to observe and understand how to organize and manage everyday work.

Expected transferable skills on return to home institute

I believe I will be able to apply the knowledge I learned during the fellowship to contribute to improving cancer management through the provision of high-quality patient care and delivery of comprehensive and coordinated treatment to patients with hematologic malignancies.

Conclusion and acknowledgements

I enjoyed the ESMO Integration Fellowship, as it gave me a significant opportunity to improve my scientific knowledge and abilities regarding all aspects of treatment and follow-up of patients with hematologic malignancies and other solid malignancies, including molecular analyses, high-dose chemotherapy, stem cell transplantation, CART cell therapy and treatment of complications. I also learned a lot about the organization of a comprehensive cancer center, including integrated palliative care, intensive care, nurse-specialist care, psycho-oncology, multidisciplinary team.

I am grateful to ESMO for this opportunity because I believe it will be a great beginning in my career and open a new direction in my life.

Thank you to all team members, especially Dr. Verena Gaidzik, Dr. Frank Stegelmann, Giulia Ciaghi, Carolin Seeling, for making me feel like part of the team and always having the time to help me to adapt to the work.

A special thank to my mentor Prof. Dohner who is a great expert in his field and a great mentor, who always made me feel welcome and was interested in my future career plan. It was a fantastic privilege and a great pleasure working in his team.

Finally, I would thank all the beautiful people who helped me always feel at home in the beautiful city Ulm.



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