

ESMO Clinical Unit Visit Report

Lymphoma Unit – Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland - Bellinzona

2nd November – 11th December 2015

Fellowship on Lymphomas

Fellow: Carla Minoia, MD PhD - Hematology Unit - Department of Medical and Experimental Oncology -IRCCS National Cancer Research Centre "Giovanni Paolo II", Bari - Italy

Mentor(s): Dr. Emanuele Zucca- Lymphoma Unit – Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland, Ospedale Regionale Bellinzona e Valli, Bellinzona - Switzerland

Introduction:

I am a young oncologist who has been working for several years on the diagnosis and treatment of patients with onco-haematological malignancies. Translational research on lymphomas is my primary area of interest. My work in this area began with my specialisation in oncology and continued in the Unit of Haematology at the IRCCS National Cancer Research Centre "Giovanni Paolo II" in Bari (Italy), where I finished my specialisation and carried out my doctoral thesis project in translational medicine in the area of the Lymphoma microenvironment. The Masters in diagnosis and therapies for patients with lymphoma, which I concluded in 2014 at the University of Udine, has expanded my knowledge and competences in both the clinical care and clinical-translational research areas of my work.

Therefore, I decided to apply for the Clinical Unit Visit Fellowship at the Lymphoma Unit of the Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland (IOSI) in Bellinzona, with the aim to: 1) Experience the working environment and organisation of a prestigious international centre for the cure of lymphomas with the view to translating this experience into my work in Bari; 2) Improve my knowledge of the diagnosis and treatment of the principal forms of lymphoma through a weekly programme put together with the Director of the host centre, Dr. Zucca; 3) Actively participate in the clinical activity of the centre and hospital meetings; 4) Participate directly in the activity of one of the largest organisations in clinical trial planning, the International Extranodal Lymphoma Study Group (IELSG); 5) Create a fruitful collaboration between my Institute and the host centre in Switzerland; 6) Enrich my post-doctoral training and my personal growth through an international experience.

Main part:

During my fellowship at IOSI, I participated in the activities of the Lymphoma Unit led by my Mentor Dr. Zucca. The main clinical activity was conducted in the day-hospital, where I was involved in the diagnostic and therapeutic approach of patients affected by lymphoma. Through the participation in the collegial visit in the ward directed by Prof. Ghielmini, I have improved my knowledge on high-dose chemotherapy and hematopoietic stem cell transplant for lymphoproliferative diseases. I participated in the weekly meetings, where there is a multidisciplinary discussion on clinical cases and on recently published papers. I appreciated the efficiency and the quality of the assistance and, moreover, the large number of clinical protocols, which offers the patients access to new chemotherapeutic agents and new drug combinations.

To better learn this aspect, I attended the Unit of clinical protocols with Dr Stathis, focusing on phase I-II studies, and participated as an observer in the meetings of IELSG on writing and monitoring international protocols. Led by Dr. Zucca, I collected clinical data on transformed follicular lymphomas and primary central nervous system lymphomas, subjects of international studies.

Globally, I have strengthened some clinical aspects of the diagnostic and therapeutic approach of patients with lymphoma, paying attention to the organizational features, and improved aspects of the clinical research within phase I-II protocols, and of translational research.

Conclusion:

The experience at the Lymphoma Unit of IOSI certainly represents a moment of human and professional growth, allowing me to be part of an international team and to ask for advice on clinical and translational topics from one of the main worldwide experts on lymphomas. In addition to the acquired expertise on lymphomas, I have strengthened some competences in clinical and research management, and teamwork, which will undoubtedly be applied at the Institution where I work.

Acknowledgements:

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Bari (Italy), 16th January 2016

Carla Minoia

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