

**ESMO TRU Visit
Oncology Institute of Southern
Switzerland (IOSI)
Bellinzona, Switzerland
10 - 13 October, 2011**



The Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland (IOSI) and the Institute of Oncology Research (IOR) - Bellinzona, Switzerland had the pleasure of hosting nine young medical oncologists during the ESMO TRU Visit entitled **“Translational Studies and New Drug Development in Oncology: The Laboratory-Clinical Interface”**. The young brilliant medical oncologists came from Belarus, Belgium, Greece, India, Italy, Mexico and Morocco.

The visit was chaired by Prof. Cristiana Sessa and Dr. Carlo Catapano. The program focused on design and conduction of phase I clinical studies in solid tumors and lymphomas; development and use of biomarkers in clinical trials; laboratory methodologies for clinical and translational studies.

The program started with a general introduction with the aim of providing young oncologists an insight into the main fields of Translational Research in Oncology: the basics, the facilities and tumour type-oriented examples. The TRU Visit was also a unique occasion for young scientists from all over Europe to visit one of the best European centres for translational oncology and exchange experiences, ideas and opinions.

During the 4-day program, the group visited the IOSI outpatient clinic, the IOR laboratories and attended several interactive lectures in early clinical trials, new drug development, translational research in solid tumors and workshops in laboratory research methodologies.

Below are the testimonials from the fellows,

Dzianis Kazakevich – Belarus: “The interactivity was probably the best features of the course. Actually, it was the very first time in my life that I had the opportunity to ask questions to top level speakers without strict time limitation. Moreover, I reckon, the most striking insights came during the discussion times”.

Diego Reis- Belgium: “It was an excellent opportunity to integrate different areas of knowledge at the same institution, with an outstanding human resources stimulating important discussions and lectures that enabled us to better integrate molecular biology and clinical research”.

Dimitrios Krikelis – Greece: “I work in a department which is very active with regards to clinical research, so the information was absolutely relevant and useful to my every day practice”.

Ahitagani Biswas – India: “The TRU visit gave us a glimpse of how to bridge laboratory research with clinical research with focus on genomics, cell biology, molecular pathology, conduct of phase I/II studies, drug development, clinical trials in lymphoma, GI cancer and prostate cancer. The sessions were interactive with ample discussion with the faculty and other participants.

Arifi Samia – Morocco: “This TRU visit provided us with better understanding of the laboratory-clinical interface, and gave us information on how translational research is performed”.

Laura Noto – Italy: “Know as cancer research is performed at the IOSI has allowed me to confirm my interest in clinical and translational research and to focus my future interest towards specific fields of study. Besides that, it has been a great chance to meet with other oncologists and researchers from different countries with whom I could exchange ideas and opinions about medical and cancer care. I hope to do other similar experiences, even for longer periods, in the future”.

Sheila Piva – Italy: “The TRU visit enables you to experience the underlying philosophy and organization of a top research institute. It also updates you on the latest research projects currently being conducted in the center. I thought it was a great idea to divide the visit in a clinical part in which we had contact with clinicians involved in phase I clinical trials and some patients, and in a pre-clinical part during which we were in the lab and saw some advanced techniques”.

Federica Recine – Italy: “The information was very useful. I appreciated all the presentations of the faculty, particularly the presentation regarding the new targeted therapies. I informed my colleagues and my chief about the presented information. We would like to collaborate with the host institute”.

Cynthia Villarreal-Garza – Mexico: “The TRU visit provided me with a more focused strategy of how to implement a phase I facility and the tools needed to start it”.

All fellows wish to thank the Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland (IOSI) team and ESMO for making this TRU visit such a unique experience and a great opportunity. The ESMO Translational Unit Visit was an excellent chance for fellows to benchmark their positions in translational research, and an opportunity for the host institute to meet gifted, young doctors with an interest for translational research.

Prof. Cristiana Sessa and Dr. Carlo Catapano
and
The ESMO Fellowship & Awards Committee

