

To NFOG foundation

Thanks to my own Department and support from NFOG and FIGO foundations I had an opportunity to spend almost 3 months at Pan Birmingham Gynaecological Cancer center, City Hospital, Birmingham, UK as a part of my subspecialty training in gynae-oncology. Department is one of the 2 ESGO certified gynae-oncological centers in UK.

City Hospital, Birmingham is the site of the Pan-Birmingham Gynaecological Cancer Center. The center is the hub of the Pan-Birmingham gynaecological cancer network which provides tertiary level care for 5 cancer units. The hospital has four academic units and is a part of the University of Birmingham Medical School. It is sited in West Birmingham and West Bromwich and it offers center services to a total catchment of almost 2 million.

The team consists of 6 consultants in gynae-oncology and 2 subspecialty trainees.

My standard working schedule was as follows: morning ward rounds on gynae-oncological department D27 followed by work at operation theatre which I attended on the daily basis (usage of theatre times on Fridays was alternating though for every second week). That suited perfectly my primary goal of the stay – thorough surgical training, especially with the focus on radical ovarian cancer surgery and laparoscopic surgery in cervical/endometrial cancers. Department offers a broad variety of surgical procedures of that kind, including extensive surgery for advanced ovarian cancer, pelvic exenteration and laparoscopic surgery as well. I enjoyed working with Mr. K.K. Chan, who is one of the founders of gynae-oncology in UK and has a huge experience and knowledge in surgery. His supervision and feedback were very valuable. It was inspiring to experience his concept of “neat surgery”. I had great opportunity to sharpen my laparoscopical skills and I appreciated feedback from Miss Kavita Signh and Mr. Janos Balega. Another great thing was to get more experience in surgical management of vulvar malignancies. Due to centralization of vulvar cancer treatment in Denmark, my own Department in Odense has lost this function since January 2011. Therefore it was very valuable for me to see and experience knowledge and supervision from prof. David Luesley, one of the leading experts in vulvar pathology.

Weekly MDTs were of great value in discussing cancer patients. They took place every Friday morning. I was impressed by the high percentage of attendance, as those MDT's were highly prioritized by means of reductions in daily functions. Every MDT was followed by grand rounds, where current patient related problems were discussed thoroughly.

The biggest surprise from the visit though was economic issues of the hospital and the whole of the NHS as a whole. But dedication and professionalism of the staff has outweighed it all. Patients received good care and up to date treatment according to international standards. I was met with openness and warmth, all of the senior colleagues were willing to share their experience with me.

According to my original plan, I should have stayed at the department until the 30th of March. I had to leave though by the 20th of March due to the planned implementation of robotic surgery at my department in Odense, Denmark, which necessitated special accreditation from Intuitive Surgical Co. for the future work with Da Vinci robot. As I was one of the members robotic team, I had to participate in this planned

accreditation process (“dry” training on 21th of March and “wet” training on 26-27th of March in Strasbourg).

It was a valuable experience for me as a cancer surgeon. Thumbs up for B’ham!

Best regards

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