

## **Summary fellowship Amsterdam 31.3.-7.5.2015**

The primary purpose of my 6-week-fellowship was to get deeper insight in the diagnostic measures and treatment of vulvar cancer. The University of Amsterdam is renowned for its experience and research in vulvar cancer treatment.

I did my fellowship at two different locations in Amsterdam: The Amsterdam Medical Center of the Free University of Amsterdam, „UvA Medisch centrum“ (AMC) and the Center for Gynecological Oncology, Amsterdam, „Centrum voor Gynaekologische Onkologi“, Antoni van Leeuwenhoek, Nederlands Kanker Instituut (AVL).

Both center are involved in the treatment of patients with gynecological cancer, and have about 500 cases per year each. I could choose between them very freely to obtain the most interesting program for me.

I spent most time at the OR, because my special interest was the surgical treatment of vulvar cancer. All together AVL and AMC treat about 120 patients with vulvar cancer per year and I could attend 15 operations during my stay of 6 weeks, amongst them many lymph node dissections (complete and sentinel node biopsies) and some very interesting plastic reconstructions, done partly by the gynecologic oncologists themselves, partly by a plastic surgeon who is very experienced in vulvar reconstructive surgery. Besides that I carried out some operations by myself, mostly laparotomies, and assisted several others, among them some radical hysterectomies conducted as open surgery which is very rare at our hospital and was very interesting and educational for me.

I participated at every multidisciplinary conference (weekly on Mondays at the AMC, on Wednesdays at the AVL). They were partly held in English, partly in Dutch which was well understandable at least in written form (my mother tongue is German).

I observed and followed the rounds at the ward a few times and had the possibility to discuss the perioperative management of the patients with the responsible colleagues at the ward.

I had the opportunity to be present at the yearly conference of the Dutch Gynecologic Oncological Society with some interesting presentations, research projects and lively discussions.

I had the possibility to discuss treatments and diagnostic measures with my colleagues daily and got insight in the current studies they are carrying out and participating in.

The department organized a „Groin Master class“-course while I was there which was aimed to all gynecologic oncology fellows at the two locations AMC and AVL and which I could participate in as well.

All together I learned a lot, in the first place about the surgical treatment of vulvar cancer, but also about all other treatment options in vulvar cancer. Even the discussions about other gynecological cancers as cervical cancer, endometrial cancer and ovarian cancer led to deeper insights in different diagnostic and therapeutic possibilities. I found it very

interesting and valuable to learn more about differences in health care systems and medical organizations. I had the great advantage to assist a very experienced gynecological surgeon and learned a lot about surgical techniques and perioperative management. We had very interesting and productive discussions about possible joint ventures in the future and I am sure that this will lead to some corporate research, in particular regarding the treatment of vulvar cancer patients.

I enjoyed my time very much, not at least because of the very friendly and welcoming colleagues I met and the positive and open-minded atmosphere at both places.

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Diana Zach