

To NFOG board,

I had the privilege to spend three weeks in the beautiful city of Sydney visiting the University of Sydney and the nearby Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Professor Ian Fraser is the head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Neonatology in Queen Elisabeth II Research Institute for Mothers and Infants, and he was kind enough to invite me to visit his Institute to learn more about the immunohistochemical methods they have been using in his Institute to identify the nerve fibers in endometriosis tissue.

Prof Fraser has - together with his multinational group - done great progress in understanding the pain mechanisms in endometriosis. His group was among the first in the world to link the presence of nerve fibers in endometriosis tissue to pain generation. His group has established a working immunohistochemical methodology to stain the nerve fibers and I got to see and learn the whole process from cutting to staining and finally counting the nerve fibers. We worked on the samples that we had previously collected in Finland from patients operated upon for deep-infiltrating endometriosis. We are currently writing a manuscript on our results and it was extremely important for me to get to go through our results in the actual laboratory where the staining had been done.

Prof Fraser also organized for me to see some clinical work in the adjacent University Hospital. Most of all I enjoyed visiting the operating theatres and I was very impressed about the efficiency in the operating theatres – the number of daily operations was very high compared to that in Finnish hospitals. It is actually very eye-opening to see how things are done in other places and hopefully some of the things I learned I can bring to our operating theatres, too.

Most and foremost, this visit gave me the great opportunity to get to know lots of wonderful people who all represent different nationalities and cultures. I took part (during one day) in the Academic writing course and there were 20 people altogether taking part in the course from 15 different countries, so, the mixture of cultures and languages was something I had never experienced before. Also, I spent some time in the laboratory just talking with my colleagues and I learned a lot of things about the way of living in Australia and about the problems that Australian society is currently facing.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the NFOG board for financially supporting my visit to Sydney University. I am convinced that this visit not only contributed towards better understanding of endometriosis but also, towards better understanding of different cultures.

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