

Pfizer International Scholarship Report – Nino Gabunia

Nino Gabunia works as a Urologist at the National Center of Urology, Tbilisi, Georgia and at the Department of Urology at Tbilisi State University. She is a recent PhD graduate (2011) and has co-authored several scientific papers.

Her hospital provides high quality care in general urology and uro-oncology but has less expertise in neurourology and functional urology. Dr. Gabunia and her colleagues are keen to establish comprehensive service catering to the needs of patients suffering from urinary tract, sexual and bowel dysfunction in Georgia and have been seeking ways to make this happen.

An opportunity arose in January 2015, when Professor Thomas Kessler from Zurich visited their Hospital regarding a bacteriophage research project. A close collaboration between the two centres evolved and as a result of the collaboration, Dr. Gabunia applied for and received an ICS Pfizer scholarship to study at the Neurourology, Spinal cord injury center, Balgrist University Hospital, Zurich under the supervision of Professor Kessler and his team. Dr. Gabunia's goal was to expanding her skills in urodynamics and enhance her knowledge in the management of individuals with neurogenic bladders.

The Pfizer International Scholarship in Urodynamics led to an excellent experience from 10 August to 10. In Dr. Gabunia's report, she notes: When I reached Zurich my lodging place at the student complex was ready, thanks to Dr. Marc Schneider, PhD Student in the Brain Research Institute, University of Zurich. He explained the types of scientific research programs they have and how they are doing urodynamics in animal models.

In Balgrist Neurourology Department there were five or six urodynamic investigations a day in neurogenic and non-neurogenic patients, and I was fully integrated in the process (history taking, physical exam, preparing for urodynamics). After the urodynamic investigation we had a discussions about each patient with professor Kessler, their management plans and future follow up. In addition to urodynamic investigations I observed and had experience with botulinum toxin injections in bladder and observing sacral neuromodulation implants in the neurogenic patients.

Also, I was very fortunate, because during my stay in Zurich, the 4th International Neurourology Meeting was held, where I had chance to meet famous neurourologists from around the world and listen their lectures and research presentations in various topics. I was able to take part in three workshops: Botulinum toxin injections in the bladder, animal research and sacral neuromodulation placement.

I would like say many thanks to the ICS and the Pfizer scholarship program for this excellent chance and great opportunity and finally express my sincere thanks to Professor Thomas Kessler and all Neurourology Department staff in Balgrist Spinal Cord injury center, where I felt so welcomed during my stay in Zurich.

