

ICS/Pfizer Fellowship Report

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Background & current work:

I'm an urologist from Moscow, working in the University hospital. Our urological department is very well known and historical Russian center. Within it we have a scientific group, which has been studying patients with functional urological diseases for 20 years. Prof Grigory Krivoborodov, the head of our scientific team, was a pioneer of botulinum toxin injections in urology in our country. With my colleagues we perform all types of diagnostic and treatments, which exist in the world practice nowadays.

Now our current work is being related with different neurotrophins (nerve growth factor, brain-derived neurotrophic factor), as biomarkers of functional disorders of urination. We also hold the local clinical research regarding using mirabegron in neurological patients (with spinal cord lesions, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease etc.).

Location and site:

Careggi University Hospital belongs to University of Florence in Italy. The department of Neurourology is located within the Spinal Cord Injury Department. The head of both structures is Giulio Del Popolo, one of the founders of neurourology in Italy. The Neurourological Dept. has a very close collaboration of Urological Dept., specialized in general urology and surgery. Thanks to that, all neurourological patients are provided with state of the art treatment (robotic, endoscopic, laparoscopic and other kinds of surgery).

I selected this host for a number of reasons. First of all, the high skills and qualification of the team members and Dr Del Popolo. It was really a great honor for me to have the chance to stay there and share the job with them. Another reason was due to the high standards of Italian medicine. And finally, my knowledge of Italian language allowed me to communicate with colleagues, patients and the hospital staff.

Expectations and Learning Objectives:

My expectations of staying in the Careggi hospital were completely satisfied. I dealt with neurological (with spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease etc.) and idiopathic patients. I expected to study indications, contraindications and complications of treatment/diagnostic methods, being used in neurourology – botulinum toxin, tibial and sacral neurostimulations, suburethral sling, artificial urinary sphincter, etc. Also my objective was to have the opportunity to perform any scientific job.

Specific details of learning and activities whilst on placement:

During the fellowship I took part in Urodynamics and videourodynamics, Botulinum toxin injections in both detrusor and sphincter in paraplegic and tetraplegic patients, bulking agent injections, implantations of sacral neurostimulation systems, implantation of female and male slings in patients with stress urinary incontinence (SUI), robotic and open bladder augmentation.

I also managed to take part in retrospective research about male patients with SUI due to neurogenic sphincter insufficiency and who were operated on with suburethral sling. With Giulio Del Popolo and his team we also wrote the abstract with the results of this research and sent it to EAU-committee for approval for their annual congress-2017.

Conclusion:

For me the fellowship in Careggi University Hospital was very valuable. I now have a very clear conception of using different treatment options, which we use in Russia with limitations due to bureaucracy issues (sacral neuromodulation, robotic bladder augmentation). Taking part in retrospective research about male sling in neurogenic patients was a unique possibility for me, as there were very rare and challenging cases in urology and neurourology.

I'm very appreciated to ICS for the possibility to study in the great European clinical center. All my needs and routine issues were sorted out by ICS-office staff very quickly and professionally.