

ESSKA Smith & Nephew Scholarship

Reported by Tomislav Smoljanovic MD (Croatia)

25 February – 31 March 2012

I have been selected to participate in the 2011-2012 edition of the ESSKA – Smith & Nephew scholarship program, which allowed me to perform a one month scholarship training in a highly accredited training centre in Western Europe. Prof. Romain Seil and his team at the Centre Hospitalier du Luxembourg were selected as my hosts.

I came to the Centre Hospitalier du Luxembourg on 25 February 2012, and I left it on 31 March 2012.

During the 5 weeks of my stay at the Department I was able to participate in complete work of the department and I was informed about the organization of the work. I participated in morning rounds and in the operating rooms. I saw work in outpatient clinic, and in the research center covering knee laxity testing and rehabilitation procedures.

Experience from the operating room was the main reason of my interest in gaining from this ESSKA scholarship, and I must say that I am completely pleased with the knowledge and experience I received from Prof. Seil and his colleagues, namely Private Docent Dietrich Pape, Dr. Nicolien Van Giffen, Dr. Manuel Haag, Dr. Alexander Hoffman, and Dr. Michael Najfeld. I assisted to numerous procedures including total and partial joint replacements of shoulder, hip and knee; variety of arthroscopic procedures in shoulder, elbow, hip, knee, and ankle (anterior and posterior approach); reconstructions of ligaments (anterior and posterior cruciate ligaments, and medial patellofemoral ligament), corrections of malalignments (tibial open wedge osteotomy (with and without correction - increasing or decreasing - of the posterior tibial slope); scarf osteotomy of the 1st metatarsal bone, Austin osteotomy, Akin osteotomy, etc.), other different foot and ankle procedures (fusions of the 1st metatarsophalangeal joint, removing of tarsal coalitions); and several acute trauma cases (peripheral talar fracture, 5th metatarsal fracture). Because of the perfect Luxembourgish economical situation and the highest professional proficiency of my hosts I was able to see practical use of many different orthopaedic devices which facilitate work in operating room and improves outcomes in patients such as Linak's motorized thigh holder, a variety of equipment for meniscus suturing, a variety of methods for ligament fixation, a variety of methods for osteosynthesis after corrective osteotomies, etc. Also, I have learnt several "cheap" tips and tricks which have already improved work in my operating room such as medial collateral needling in cases of tight medial compartment, or small corrections of tibial tunnel positioning during anterior cruciate ligament reconstructions by gradual increase in the drill diameter while correcting the position of the guide wire. Although the Croatian economic situation and availability of the newest and expensive orthopaedic equipment are pretty different from the Luxembourgish situations, the knowledge and experience I got

during the ESSKA scholarship encouraged me to successfully start with some procedures (of course with some modifications related to used equipment) improving by that the care of my patients.

Finally, for me personally the most important gain from the ESSKA scholarship in Luxembourg was friendship with the Luxembourgish colleagues who made my stay there unbelievably pleasant and unforgettable. Since I came back home, I have already used their great kindness and expertise asking them for advices in treatment decisions for some of my patients.

I just hope that I will be able to reciprocate once as their host here in Croatia.

Once again, thank you for choosing me for the ESSKA Smith & Nephew Scholarship, and for choosing Prof. Seil and his team for my hosts.

Sincerely Yours,

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