ESSKA-SLARD S&N Travelling Fellowship 2017
Mexico-Bolivia-Chile-Argentina-Brasil
28 July – 20 August 2017

Godfather: Prof. Juan Carlos Monllau (Barcelona, Spain)
Fellows: Peter de Leeuw (The Netherlands)
Egemen Altan (Turkey)
Alexandros Apostolopoulos (Greece)

‘The Ultimate Experience’

We met each other in Madrid, then flew to Mexico, the land of Corona beer and exotic food. That’s how we began our ESSKA-SLARD Fellowship, safe and happy in Mexico City, the 28th July. The Camino Real Hotel was conveniently located at the airport, and after dropping our luggage we were picked up for an excellent Mexican lunch with Mr Fernando Torres at the San Angel Inn. Both Mr Torres and the food surprised us in many ways, what a warm welcome: and how tasty are ants’ eggs!

The following day, we visited our host Mr Jose Busto at CEMA, a private institute located at the training facility of the famous Pachuca Football Club. Here we watched Mr Busto and Mr Acuña Tovar performing ACL surgery. The training facilities for the Pachuca soccer team, which include their own sports university, were very impressive. After lunch, we visited the stadium to watch a soccer match. It seemed unreal, when they told us that one of their surviving pyramids has the exact ground-floor dimensions as an Egyptian pyramid. Coincidence? We didn’t know, but standing before this amazing construction made one feel humble.

On Monday, 31 July we went to the Instituto Nacional de Rehabilitación (INR) to experience some nice surgeries — both total hip arthroplasty as well as hip arthroscopy by our host Victor Sanchez and his great team. This was followed by a tour of the INR centre including its massive research facilities and meeting the head of the hospital. An unforgettable experience already in the first country we visited, what was to come next... La Paz, Bolivia!

La Paz, the Bolivian capital is built at an altitude of 3,640 m. We arrived at the airport at 2.00 am and were warmly received by Mr Calderon, Mr Fuendes and Mr Claros.

The next day, Mr Claros, accompanied us on our visit to the Hospital Materno-Infantil, (children and maternity hospital). We joined the staff on their rounds discussing and reviewing the inpatients, mainly children and young adults with chronic and acute orthopaedic problems. We
also participated in the departmental meeting and discussed some interesting and complex cases that were presented. It was an excellent opportunity to share and exchange knowledge with our colleagues in Bolivia. The same evening, we attended the International Knee and Shoulder symposium hosted by SBOLOT and ABAMED, where we gave our presentations and participated in some complex case discussion. Dinner at the Camino Real Hotel Restaurant enabled us to exchange knowledge, to learn about Bolivian culture and health care system, and to bond with our colleagues.

We visited the Hospital Arco Iris the next day, and joined Mr Fuentes in theatre, who was operating on a young patient suffering from recurrent patella dislocation and patella alta. After this, Mr Fuentes gave us a trip through the famous “death road” (Ruta de la muerte), and a visit to a coffee plantation.

On our final day in Bolivia, we visited the hospital Caja Petrolera and, after a guided tour, we joined our host Mr Calderon in the theatre. Mr Calderon had organised a visit to the Bolivar football club, the city of La Paz, the famous cable car of La Paz, followed by dinner with himself and his daughter at his house. Sadly, we had to leave by midnight to catch our flight to Santiago, Chile, which was our next destination.

We were received at the airport by Mr Gonzalo Ferrer, a former fellow of our Godfather, and next morning, we took a wine tour of Estancia El Cuadro, to improve our knowledge of wine. We then had lunch with Mr Ferrer and his colleague, Juan Jose Valderrama, and discussed the different health systems in our countries. In the evening, we joined our host, Mr Vicente Gutierrez, and spent the evening at a traditional Chilean restaurant in the city centre.

We had the opportunity to see some shoulder arthroscopy cases, including a patient with multidirectional instability and arthroscopic treatment of a tibial spine fracture, under the guidance of our Godfather at the Clinica Las Condes, a huge private medical centre. We also saw see some shoulder arthroscopy cases including a patient with multidirectional instability and arthroscopic treatment of a tibial spine fracture, again with the guidance of our godfather.

During the afternoon, we joined a special scientific meeting organised by MEDS Clinic Orthopaedic Department, where they presented some cases followed by a case-based discussion. Together with the AOSSM Fellows, and the entire orthopaedic department of Clinica Las Condes, there followed a scientific session. All the travelling Fellows presented their research work.

The following day, we were again in the operation rooms of the Clinica Las Condes with a couple of knee cases. In the afternoon, we took advantage of the great weather, for nice walk through the streets of Santiago. There was a wonderful dinner at an Italian restaurant, with our host, on the last evening, and then our flight to Rosario, Argentina, early the next morning.

We reached Rosario on 10th August, and met Mr Daniel Slullitel and his team the same evening in a beautiful restaurant next to the Parana river. The next day, we visited the hospital and observed a multi-directional shoulder instability surgery and an anterior-cruciate ligament reconstruction combined with an extrarticular ALL tenodesis. The same afternoon, we gave our lectures at the Jaimes Slullitel clinic, along with some members of Mr Slullitel’s team, and discussed interesting cases and techniques. In the evening, we had an “Asado” (the Argentinian way of barbecuing meat) in a place with a great view of the city.
On Friday, we attended the meeting of the Argentinian Arthroscopic Society with live surgery (ACL by using hamstrings, BPTB and quadriceps tendons, PCL and PLC reconstruction) and had a very interesting discussion and debate over arthroscopic techniques and grafting.

On Saturday, we attended a cadaveric knee course which was organised at the University of Rosario. We practised ACL reconstruction, ALL tenodesis, Quadriceps tendon harvesting and dynamic MPFL reconstruction under the guidance of our Godfather.

On Sunday, Dr Slullitel had organised a trip to the Border Rio winery and left for Sao Paulo, Brazil, the next day.

On Monday, 14th August, we reached our final destination Sao Paulo where we were welcomed by Mr Benno Ejnisman.

On Tuesday, we again met our AOSSM friends Robert Schenck (Godfather), Dain Allred, Seth Sherman and Marc Tomkins and our host in Mr Gustavo Arliani. We visited the Federal University of Sao Paolo where we also met Mr Moises Cohen and his staff. Robert, Juan Carlos, Dain, Marc and Peter gave their presentations at the University of Sao Paulo. After a brief lunch break and a few caipirinhas, we went to the Moises Cohen Institute where Juan Carlos, Robert, Alex and Seth presented their lectures.

The next morning, we joined Moises and Camila Cohen and Benno Ejnisman at the Albert Einstein Hospital and watched live surgery. Then we enjoyed a very elegant dinner at Moises Cohen’s house hosted by himself and his wife.

The following day, the ESSKA and AOSSM group accompanied by Gustavo Arliani flew to Curitiba and visited the IJO clinic. Our host Lucio Ernlund had organised a city tour, a visit to the famous Niemeyer museum, and a warm welcome at his house where we had a chance to meet many SLARD members. In Curitiba, we attended the SBRATE congress and presented our lectures and we also got a chance to interact with our AOSSM and SLARD friends.

Sadly, the fellowship had to come to an end! So we said our goodbyes to all our SLARD hosts, and also big THANK YOU! for their wonderful hospitality. We have gained knowledge, learned some different cultures, and met some beautiful people and made them friends.

We would like to thank our Godfather and friend, Juan Carlos Monllau, for his safe guidance, his support and help throughout our trip. Last but not least, a Big thank you! to ESSKA for making this dream fellowship come true.

We are extremely thankful to S&N for supporting the scientific segments of the travelling fellowship.

See pictures on the following page