After the government of the USA decided to open up its borders to travellers again after long months of restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ESSKA office informed us that the ESSKA-AOSSM ENOVIS travelling fellowship could finally take place in the summer of 2022. We were selected as fellows a while ago and were very excited to be able to travel with our outstanding godfather, world-renowned leader in knee surgery, master and artist of the patella, David Dejour. Who are we? Maristella F. Saccomano (Brescia, Italy), Guri Ranum Ekås (Oslo, Norway) and Katja Tecklenburg (Innsbruck, Austria), three enthusiastic female orthopaedic and sports medicine surgeons.

*The best to represent “Women in ESSKA”*
We met for the first time during this year at the ESSKA congress in Paris.
We visited 7 sport medicine centres across USA from east to west and attended two congresses: the Magellan and the AOSSM, which was a special edition with the 50th anniversary of the society.

**New York, New York – New York University (NYU) Langone**

**Hosts: Laith Jazrawi and Michael Alaia**

After a long but comfortable flight out of different airports in Europe, we all met in the heart of New York City, our first stop of the tour. Our hosts from NYU Langone hospital had organised a welcome reception with a spectacular view of the city where we got introduced to the whole group of NYU. After an evening walk through Manhattan, we fell into our beds. The next day started early with a scientific session at 6 am. We never really got used to these early morning sessions that seem to be common in the US. However, getting up early meant we were rewarded with interesting presentations by our hosts. Michael Alaia talked about the importance of the tibial slope in PCL reconstruction cases, Laith Jazrawi presented a complex shoulder instability case and Eric Strauss talked about treatment options for osteochondral defects. Together with coffee and fresh bagels, our morning was perfect. Next, our hosts had prepared a very interesting and efficient session in the OR; a complex multi-ligament case with the use of ACL, PCL and MCL allografts done by Laith Jazrawi and Michael Alaia, a patellar instability case after PF resurfacing, meniscus surgery and more. At lunch time, a huge pile of New York style pizzas was waiting for us.
In the afternoon a cadaver lab session was organised. David demonstrated his famous trochleoplasty technique and carefully explained each step of the procedure, followed by a great discussion of surgical indications. This was a unique experience for us and the local surgeons. We decided to walk back to the hotel and had only a few minutes to change clothes before heading to the baseball stadium in Bronx. Our host had invited us to a New York Yankees baseball game. For us it was quite an experience to take the metro in NYC to Bronx. We found out that David’s signature red jeans make him very suspicious in this city, since it is a membership sign of one of the two big gangs in New York. We were terrified! Or relieved? Nobody would rob a member of the gangs. Our first day was packed with highlights, but on our way back to the hotel we could all feel the jetlag sneaking up on us. We all agreed, it was time for bed!

The next morning at 6.30 am we presented our research in the main hospital auditorium with 70 residents in the audience. Qualified questions and good discussions made it a highly interesting session. Guri presented long-term prospective follow-up of children with ACL injury. Maristella presented her study on volumetric evaluation of glenoid and humeral bone defects in shoulder instability. Katja talked about immediate ACL reconstruction within 48 hours after surgery and David showed us how and when to do his world famous trochleoplasty in patellofemoral instability. Coffee was served in 1-litre cups and did a phenomenal job in rehydrating us. Afterwards, it was time for our New York sightseeing tour. In the Empire State Building the elevators took us all the way up to the 102nd floor. What a view over the big apple! We went to the Rockefeller Center, 5th Avenue, Ground Zero and then ended up in a rooftop bar near Hudson River.
After a visit of the Museum of Modern Arts and Central Park the next morning, our journey continued on to Rochester in upstate New York.

What we picked up from our hosts:
- efficiency in surgery
- teaching and being open minded to the residents and fellows
- New York style friendly – active – exiting
Rochester, New York – University of Rochester

Hosts: Brian Giordano, Michael Maloney, Ilya Voloshyn, Sandeep Mannava and Ray Kenney

In Rochester we started off well, we were invited to a private dinner at Michael Maloney’s house, with wonderful and healthy food thanks to his wife Kara Maloney. Our hosts tried to make our visit as pleasant as possible right from the start. The next day, Brian Giordano had organised a day on his incredible and powerful boat at one of the finger lakes close to Rochester. We spent the day wake surfing and enjoying the lake. Brian Giordano, Michael Maloney, Ilya Voloshyn, Sandeep Mannava and Ray Kenney made the day absolutely memorable. We understood immediately that Katja was a sports-woman and good at water surfing, that Guri was better on snow than on water, Maristella … a great entertainer but not so much a fan of sports… and David was enjoying sun but not so much water…

Back to work the next day! We attended an early morning session in the auditorium of Rochester University with many residents and all partners. We presented our talks and had some interesting case discussions. We also got a tour of the new orthopaedic hospital that is being built at a former shopping mall. We were impressed by the size and highly dedicated planning of the new hospital project. Lunch and dinner were again used for forming friendships and discussions with our hosts.

The following day started at 7.30 am in the operating room. Brian Giordano performed two hip arthroscopies. One was a labral reconstruction with allograft posterior tibial tendon and lots of knotless suture anchors. Two patellofemoral cases in the OR were done by Ray Kenney. He must have been super nervous having the king of PF instability looking over his shoulders while doing MPFL reconstruction and TTO but he did it in a magnificent way. An extraordinary lunch took place at Rochester City Club, where we were kindly invited by Sandeep Mannava.

In the afternoon, we went into the cadaver lab. Another trochleoplasty, this time done by the fellows and more interesting procedures performed by David made the day just perfect: Lemaire extra articular plasty, Tibial Tubercle Osteotomy, tibial deflexion osteotomy… we had a great time and we learned a lot!

Not much later, Mike Maloney picked us up for dinner at the Oak Hill Country Club. One of the most prestigious golf courses in the US lies just in front of the club. Dinner itself was an outstanding experience.
On the balcony of the Oak Hill Country Club

What we picked up from our hosts:
- Team work and extreme kindness
- Great organisation in the university
- Health care changing and how to deal with the new world

Rochester, Minnesota – Mayo Clinic
Hosts: Aaron Krych, Daniel Saris and Bruce Lewy

The next day was a travelling day. Our new hosts picked us up at the airport to drive us to Rochester again, this time in Minnesota. We were invited to the famous Mayo clinic! Daniel Saris and his group welcomed us with a wonderful private dinner party in his garden. We were honored to meet Diane Dahm who came with very special gifts for us.

The following day started early with a scientific session organized by Dr Aaron Krych. We then headed into the OR. Kelechi Okoroha repaired a patella tendon avulsion rupture with anchor refixation, Aaron Krych showed us several ACL reconstructions using allograft and autograft with the quad tendon and also a meniscus repair. More shoulder surgery addressing recurrent instability was presented by Kelechi Okoroha as well. We then got a tour of the Mayo Clinic campus under the guidance of Bruce
Levy, which gave us an introduction of the history of Mayo Clinic and immense accomplishments of the Mayo brothers who founded the clinic. It was simply amazing to understand what the Mayo brothers did with this incredible successful vision to build such a medical empire in such a small city and make Mayo one of the world-famous hospitals in the world.

What we picked up from our hosts:
- Efficiency in terms of organisation: a vision
- Great Surgeons
- how to deal successfully with health care conditions

Minneapolis, Minnesota – TRIA Hospital

Hosts: Brad Nelson, Marc Tomkins and Elizabeth Arendt

After a car transfer to Bloomington in Minneapolis, we were invited to Brad Nelson’s house, where we met his family and colleagues. A scientific session at TRIA Hospital in Bloomington marked the start of the next day before we went to the OR. Marc Tomkins did a TTO and MPFL reconstruction in his first patient of the day. He showed us how he measures femoral rotation on the computer screen in a very simplistic way. A femoral and tibial derotation osteotomy in a young lady with chronic patellofemoral instability combined with MPFL reconstruction was another highlight. Maristella observed a bankart repair performed by Brad Nelson and a rotator cuff repair done by John Brahman.

The day ended with a visit to another baseball game where we became more familiar with the game’s rules while watching the Minnesota Twins play. Our star guest in the sky box at the stadium was Liza Arendt! We had a wonderful discussion about Women in ESSKA while we ate hotdogs and enjoyed the time together with the colleagues from TRIA.
With Lisa Arendt from the box

What we picked up from our hosts:
- Women in the orthopaedic world
- Endless Discussion about Patellofermoral joints
- Kindness and simplicity to handle our patients

San Francisco, California – Stanford University

Hosts: Marc Safran, Seth Sherman and Mike Freehill

Just a flight later and at the beginning of the Independence Day weekend, we landed in San Francisco. We had a pick up and a warm welcome in SFO by Marc Safran and Seth Sherman. After checking-in at our hotel in Palo Alto, Marc gave us a tour around the city, where we visited the tech museum as well as the Google and Facebook/Meta campuses. Google bikes look cool!
The day ended with a few sundowner beers for the 3 fellows at the hotel pool, before we walked into downtown and enjoyed a Vietnamese dinner together with our hosts. On Sunday, Marc showed us the campus of Stanford University with all its impressive scientific and sports facilities. He had also organised a scientific session and lunch. Once again, the presentations were followed by an intensive discussion with our hosts and local fellows.

Then we headed on to a winery in the Californian mountains, where we visited the vineyards, wine tasting included.

July 4th – Independence Day!

David decided to stay at the hotel while we three fellows, Maristella, Guri and Katja, went to Half Moon Bay, a beautiful little surfer town on the Pacific coast, only 40 minutes away from Palo Alto. We hiked along the incredible beach, had coffee on the oceanside and then hiked a coastal trail. Lunch at the local Fish Market was an adventure: very rustic but great seafood. At night we were invited to Marc Safran’s house before we headed to our third baseball game of this fellowship. The Oakland Athletics won! We got access to the field and were sitting on the lawn while watching
an incredible firework in the stadium. So many celebrations here in the USA on the 4th of July! It was sooo cool!

The following day, we started early and left for the hospital at 5.30 am. Three of Marc Safran’s fellows presented their research projects. In the OR we were able to observe a hip arthroscopy case in a 15-year-old patient performed by Marc Safran with his very specific none aggressive technique, a meniscus case of Seth Shermann and two shoulder cases with Mike Freehill. The bovine allograft patch used for a PASTA lesion of the supraspinatus also caught our attention.

Lunch with the whole Stanford team took place at a Mexican taco place. After reuniting, we drove into San Francisco with our hosts and had a wonderful sightseeing tour. The evening ended in a great steakhouse next to Bay Bridge with good conversation, exchange of presents and the knowledge that lifelong friendships had been made at every place we had visited.

What we picked up from our hosts:
- San Francisco - the city where new things happened
- Extremely performant university - so inclusive
- Friendship, friendship, friendship…

**Chicago, Illinois – Rush University**

**Host: Dr Verma**

After another flight, this time to Chicago, we were invited to Dr. Nikhil Verma’s house and received a very warm welcome. Bernard Bach and David found that they were wearing identical glasses, time for a photo of the two!

*The “vision” in orthopaedics… certainly!*
With another early start into the day, our group split up and went to different surgery centres. Maristella watched several shoulder and knee cases with Nikhil Verma, Guri spent an interesting day in clinic and OR with Jorge Chahla. David and Katja joined Brian Cole for his outpatient clinics. Shane No also did an ACL reconstruction. Dinner was combined with a scientific session in an Asian restaurant downtown. Once again, we presented our scientific work and were granted an intense discussion. The food was marvelous. Shortly said, a fun night! The next day we drove into Indiana to see surgery with Brian Cole and later with Jorge Chahla. Later that afternoon we went on an architectural sightseeing boat tour on the Chicago River before we met the group from Rush again at a… you guessed it …baseball game. By now we were familiar with the essential rules of the game and finally we stamped “expect in baseball”.

What we picked up from our hosts:
- How to organise the best efficiency in treating patients
- Team work with surgeons, PA and nurses and hospitals
- Great skillfulness in surgery fast and sure

**Denver, Colorado – Meeting of the Magellan Society**

Upon arrival, we joined the welcome reception of the Magellan Society at Union Station in downtown Denver. We met other travelling fellows from the APKASS group, discussed our travel routes and also rejoined with most of our hosts of the last weeks. Later that night we ended up in a rooftop bar once again.
The meeting started with a long and fulfilling day in the meeting rooms with the Magellan Society. What an honour for us to become members of this society as well. The evening reception took place outside of our hotel. After dinner we couldn’t resist to visit another rooftop bar, however, this time only on the 3rd floor. After a quick coffee in the hotel lobby the next morning, the Magellan Society meeting relocated to Devil’s Thumb Ranch in Tabernash, Colorado. After a buffet lunch at the ranch, we gathered again for more scientific sessions. The next day was another highlight, since we then could present our own work to the audience (only great names in orthopaedics, one might even say the giants!). By now, we had made friends with the other travelling fellows from all over the world and indulged in the scientific conversation. This meeting was an extraordinary opportunity to meet and discuss our ideas with best surgeons across the world in a very friendly and familiar atmosphere… the perfect setting to start solid and everlasting international scientific collaboration!

During our stay at the ranch out west we had a go at mountain biking in the beautiful scenery, horseback riding and also tried out the art of archery.

**Colorado Springs, Colorado – AOSSM Annual Meeting**

Early morning July 13th we waved goodbye to Katja – a sad moment! Then we travelled with our Magellan Society friends through the Colorado plains and mountains to Colorado Springs – the Olympic city of the US. We passed the mighty stone formations in the Garden of Gods and enjoyed the mountainous scenery of Colorado Springs, the final destination of our tour. The Broadmore Resort and the 50th AOSSM Annual Meeting was a fabulous closure of this adventure. We met up with old and new friends, attended great scientific sessions and celebrated the 50th anniversary of the AOSSM. We had a great time! Together with the AOSSM, its members and meeting participants, we saluted the 2022 Hall of Fame Inductees: Elizabeth Arendt (MD), James Bradley (MD) and Edward McDevitt (MD) and the Society Award Winners Thomas L. Wickiewicz (MD), Christopher C. Kaeding (MD), Micheal J. Stuart (MD) and William E. Garreth Jr. (MD, PhD). Their contributions and achievements throughout their careers are extraordinaire, exemplary and truly inspiring!

Finally, the ESSKA symposium was a great success with a packed room, and we were honoured during the fellows’ reception and got the magnificent diploma!
On July 17th, the ESSKA-AOSSM travelling fellowship 2022 came to an end. What an adventure we have experienced – so many memories, new friends as well as knowledge and skills to bring into our practice.

Thank you to all our hosts and to Jeff Boyle for arranging this tour. Thank you to ESSKA, AOSSM and to ENOVIS for making this fellowship possible. Thank you to everyone we met during our tour for taking so good care of us.

We are forever grateful – thank you! Hope to see you soon.

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