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Country of residence: Romania
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Name of the host: Universitätsklinikum Carl Gustav Carus, Dresden
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EFORT Visiting Fellowship Report

I remember the day when I received an email from EFORT congratulating me in receiving a six months fellowship; it was a very happy day for me, receiving such great news. This meant a huge professional opportunity.

Dresden was my first choice from the host centers, because Universitätsklinikum Carl Gustav Carus is best renowned in Europe for the orthopedic and trauma department, especially in reconstruction field and second because the city itself is very famous for its history and culture. That is way, when I found out that I was selected for the fellowship program, I was very glad and honored by this given chance.

The overall pre fellowship procedure, including documents sending process was easy and straight-forward and communication with both parties involved (EFORT and the O&U department of UKD "Carl Gustav Carus") was very prompt. There were no difficulties whatsoever.

I arrived in Germany with five days earlier in order to accommodate. Because of this I had a little bit of time to do some sight-seeing. Dresden is an amazing city, very clean, being one of the greenest cities in Europe, full of history and overall a great experience with its great Saxonian culture. I went to the main touristic attractions throughout the city like Frauenkirche, Zwinger Palace and Brühl's Terrace. Also I visited attractions in the surrounding areas like Moritzburg Castle and Pillnitz Castle.

I started my fellowship Monday the 2nd of October 2017; I presented myself first thing in the morning at Miss Gröschel's office and after completing some bureaucratic procedures (signing papers, receiving my locker, etc.) I was invited to the morning conference, where I met Professor Günther and the rest of the staff. Of course, as any new beginnings, the first couple of days were a little stressful, being new to the place and not really knowing the staff or the proper order of business. The hospital itself is huge, with only the Orthopedic and Trauma department spread across three buildings, roughly 1300 beds, and five operation theaters dedicated to the chronic orthopedic patients only. So it is easy to understand how one can be a little confused at first.

After a short period of my arrival, I had a meeting with the Professor in his office regarding my training program. We both decided that since I am there for a total of 6 months doing a hip and knee joint reconstruction and preservation fellowship, I should be for three months on the hip team and the following three months on the knee team. Because I started in the hip department, he also made sure that everybody in the team knew about me, this included the consultants, residents, other fellows and nurses.



Shortly after my arrival, towards the end of October (24-27), the German congress for orthopedic and trauma (DKOU2017) was held in Berlin. It was a great surprise for me that Professor Günther also arranged a registration for me. It was a great academic experience, unlike any other congress that I attended. Most impressive part was the greatness of the whole thing, with roughly 35.000 attendees, more than 200 firms and almost 2000 lectures. It is without a doubt a congress that I would like to attend to it again in the future.

As mentioned above, I started my fellowship working entirely in the hip team/department. The program began daily at 7:30 with the morning conference. There were plenty of daily scrub-in opportunities for me. Most of my training was along Professor Günther, Doctor Hartmann and Doctor Goronzy, but also from time to time I joined other surgeons especially from the infection department.

During my stay at UKD I had the opportunity to refine my knowledge regarding primary THA and especially have a better understanding of cementing technique. Also I had clarifications regarding intraoperative assessment and resolving problems like LLD and proper offset achieving. I also had the chance to familiarize myself with surgical hip approaches that I had no previous experience, like the minimal invasive one and the posterior one, which were done routinely here.

Beside the new approaches, I had the chance to see a lot of new implants that I also wasn't familiar with. One example is the dual mobility cup, frequently used here, which gave me some new insights about approaching certain problems.

For instance a pathology that is commonly under-diagnosed in Romania is femuro-acetabular impingement. Here at UKD, I had the opportunity to properly study this problem, starting from clinical presentation, clinical signs, imaging studies and finally surgical resolution. I enjoyed participating in a large number of patients with CAM deformity, most of them being treated with very new technique, like the arthroscopically assisted surgery.

Moreover I participated in a lot of hip revision surgeries and peri-acetabular osteotomies. This gave me the chance to properly study these surgical techniques, which were vaguely known and to hope that maybe someday I'll have the chance to apply them back home.

Another part of the program was non-surgical activities, which I had to attend on a regular basis. First of all I joined the doctors for their outpatient clinic, which was usually on Wednesdays. Here I had the chance to see them interact with the patients and do consultations. Also every Thursday the adult replacement department held the big visit, with all the consultants.

Either during surgery or during the other non-surgical activities I had the chance to ask a lot of questions and to clarify certain issues. All of the doctors that I worked with were helpful in discussing cases, sharing experiences and also sharing some tips and tricks.

After the second half of January, I switched to the knee department, where I had the opportunity to work with Professor Lutzner, Dr Sensenschmidt and Dr Amlang. Like in the previous period, I had the chance to get more familiar with surgical techniques and to have a better understanding of primary TKA. There were several implants that I was not used to and that I had the chance to see. Also I had the chance to assist in several navigated replacements, a technique that I never seen live before.



Among other procedures, I have been interested and taken part in knee prosthesis revision cases, cruciate ligament reconstruction, meniscal repairs, realignment osteotomies (both distal femoral and proximal tibial), all of this being very important for my practice back home. Overall at the finish of my 6 months fellowship I have been involved in almost 200 surgeries, out of which 107 were hip procedures, 68 were knee procedures and the rest representing other type of surgeries.

In conclusion my half a year training in Dresden was probably the greatest opportunity in my career so far, regarding my personal professional development. I had the chance to get a better understanding of adult joint preservation and replacements from masters in these techniques and also to learn new approaches, implants and receive important tips and tricks. Moreover I had the chance to do networking and create friendships with orthopedic surgeons from Germany and other European countries. Also it has been a beautiful cultural experience, having the chance to meet new and interesting people, expand my knowledge of local tradition and history.

In the end I would like to thank a lot, firstly to EFORT and to Smith&Nephew who made this incredible professional experience happen. I would also like to give a big thanks to all the staff of the O&U department at UKD, who treated me as one of their one for the last six months, but mostly to Professor Günther, Dr. Hartmann, Dr. Goronzy, Professor Lutzner, Dr. Sensenschid for teaching me. I would also want to thank Mrs. Gröschel for her support and to my friends from the operation theater Stephan Moke and Luise Richter. In the end I would also like to thank Sanni Hiltunen from EFORT, who although I did not get to meet in person, was very nice and helpful during the whole process.