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Name: **Javier Martin Becerra**
Country of residence: Mexico
Country of visiting fellowship: Belgium
Name of the host: Dr. Peter Mertens
Dates of visiting fellowship: April-June 2018

Report about the outcome and economic result of the EFORT Visiting Fellowship

02/JULY/2018

To whom it may concern:

After this past 3 months, I have nothing but good feelings. For me it was a pleasure to be a part of this program. Education is the foundation of every discipline, but now a day there are not many institutions that are promoting and helping to improve education. So, I feel really lucky to be a part of this program.

From the beginning, in my case it ran very smoothly, mainly thanks to Sanni Hiltunen, who is doing a wonderful job being in charge of the EFORT programs. We sorted out everything right away and I got in touch with my host Dr. Peter Mertens.

Since the very beginning Dr Mertens made a special effort to make my stay in Antwerp easier and pleasant. He arranged my transportation for the 3 months (Bicycle) and also a place to stay, which sometimes can be a bit difficult because it's a short time and different countries have special requirements, so I was very thankful to him for everything.

At my arrival in Antwerp I was very impressed, my expectations for the city were very high and of course they were fulfilled, the central station is one of the most beautiful buildings ever made, so my first impression was spectacular. Antwerp is a very modern city without losing its heritage, the central part has a more classic style than the suburbs which are more modern.

Upon my arrival as I stated before, everything was arranged so I just walked out of the central station and went in to bed to recover from the jetlag (it's always hard after a 9 hrs flight and 2:30 hrs train) but once I was fully recovered my adventure was about to start. I always travel alone so I'm very used to do the flying solo, so I went to the centre of the city had a nice meal with a delicious Belgian beer and went to bed early to get ready for the week.

the hospital "ZNA Middelheim" is a huge centre it has many operating rooms and around 10 floors for patients. It is fully renovated on the first floor and it's on the outer ring of the main Antwerp area (this means parks, forest and a very nice bicycle only lane), the first day Dr. Mertens took me around the hospital introduced me to the staff and gave a brief presentation of all the cases that accumulated during the weekend.



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After that I went out to get my badge which is necessary to open the elevators and the operating theatres.

The first two weeks the chief of resident arranged everything for me, since I was new to the system I had no idea of how they really did everything, so they were kind enough to guide me step by step.

Language in the operating room was not a problem since everyone spoke very fluent English but during the consultation it was a limitation because it's always a little hard to change the approach to another language and for senior patients probably wasn't the best as they didn't feel that comfortable, so at the end I chose to do the thing I love the most and opted to go just for surgeries (probably the dream of every surgeon).

So, my week during the fellow was filled with surgeries, in this centre there is 4 surgeons performing replacements, Dr. Mertens the chief of orthopaedics who is focused in hip and knee doing around 10-12 cases per week, Dr. Brabants the senior surgeon with all of the classic tips and tricks for young surgeons who also performs hip and knee. Dr. Maes the young surgeon who is performing anterior approach and its very involved in the academic program doing mainly hip, and Dr. Berger another young surgeon specialized in knee. This gave me an opportunity to see similar approaches for every patient but different mentalities as each of the surgeons has they own trademark.

During the week on Monday I joined Dr Brabants who is doing classical anterolateral approach for hip replacement with capsulectomy, always refers the gluteus minus so it was a little different from witch I'm used to, the anatomic dissection was very educational because he's always looking for the minus, and for knee replacements a very classical anterior approach, what I enjoyed most with him is that he gave me very good tips in how to ream the acetabulum which was very nice.

Tuesday was surgical day with Dr. Mertens, same school in hip surgery anterolateral approach, but he's always taking the capsule with the gluteus minus and repairing the capsule, more similar to my training. it was always a delight to join him in surgery, for every case he systematically does a protocol so he never forgets something, he thought me how to properly measure the offset of a hip to get a proper tension. For knee replacements, he's also with the same mentality, have a mental map and always follow it, this is why he always gets perfect balancing with the smallest poly insert. He got me into the mentality of a medial pivot knee and how to proper balance one and also his tricks to always get a distal femoral cut very accurate, for patellar replacement he has a lot of experience because every case gets a patella, not very common in my country.

Wednesday, it was again with Dr. Brabants but sometimes I joined Dr Buedts the foot and ankle surgeon. He was also very open to have me in his surgery's and very academic with a different approach on ankle fractures.

Thursdays, I re-joined Dr. Mertens for more hip and knee replacements and sometimes a few arthroscopic knees in the morning which was also very nice to learn. And sometimes Dr. Maes to learn a little about the anterior approach and its advantages.

Friday, I usually went into some hip trauma for a few nails and every now and then a common fracture.



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During the 3 months, I also got the opportunity to participate in the Acta Orthopaedica Belgica (The Belgian Orthopaedic Society), the Micro port Orthopaedics Masterclass for superpath and medial pivot knee in which Dr. Mertens was a faculty and also the biannual congress for MPK in London where also Dr. Mertens presented his experience.

At the end of the fellowship my experience improved substantially being involved in 263 cases, 82 total knee arthroplasties, 47 total hip arthroplasties, 9 hip and knee arthroplasty revision, around 93 arthroscopies and 42 trauma cases.

I could not thank you enough for this opportunity, it really opened my eyes to see what's missing and how can I improve my personal practice and maybe help also some of my colleagues at my country.

I will always be thankful to the EFFORT foundation and Dr. Peter Mertens for believing in me and giving this opportunity of a lifetime.

Thank you very much

Regards

Javier Martin