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Visiting Fellowship Report

Name:	MARCO DISTEFANO
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Country of residence:	ITALY
Country of visiting fellowship:	SWITZERLAND
Host centre:	SHOULDER AND ELBOW CENTER, LINDENHOFSPITAL, BERN
Name of the host:	PROF. RALPH HERTEL
Dates of visiting fellowship:	02/10 – 27/12/2023

It is recommended that the report is 3-4 pages including the cover page.

The following paragraphs should be addressed:

1. Description of clinical activities during the fellowship
2. Description of scientific activities during the fellowship
3. Description of social aspects of the fellowship
4. Technical skills that I learnt during the fellowship
5. Theoretical knowledge that I learnt during the fellowship
6. New knowledge and skills that I can implement in my own practice
7. Overall reflective statement over how the fellowship contributed to my professional development
8. What are you plans for the future?

Expenses:

Travel: EUR..250 CHF.
 Accommodation: EUR..3900 CHF.
 Other expenses: EUR...2000 CHF

Topic	Please tick one of the boxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 (poor) to 5 (very good)					Your comments, thoughts, recommendations
	1	2	3	4	5	
Education						
Could you improve your knowledge and gain new experiences?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Host Department						
How was your communication with your host centre (regarding accommodation, programme, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Did they offer you a social programme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



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Report to EFORT:

My name is Marco Distefano, and I am an Italian Orthopedic surgeon. I work at "Santa Maria Annunziata" Hospital in Florence. I completed my specialization nearly two years ago and starting from the last years of my residency, I focused on and deepened my knowledge in shoulder surgeries, with also other fellowships. Currently, my daily practice is mainly dedicated to upper limb surgery.

As a young specialist, I felt the need to continue my professional growth and compare my activities with international experts in reference centers. For this reason, I sought a fellowship that would provide me with this opportunity. At the conclusion of my experience, I want to express my gratitude to the EFORT Foundation and Medacta for supporting me in my visiting Fellowship at the Shoulder and Elbow Center in Lindenhofspital, Bern, with Prof. Ralph Hertel. It fully met my needs.

My three-month fellowship, which began on October 2, 2023, and concluded on December 27, 2023, allowed me to witness a substantial volume of consultations, almost 500, and participate in 118 surgical procedures, all related to shoulder and elbow pathologies.

During this period, Prof. Hertel was in full practicing and providing me the opportunity to observe a wide range of surgeries. The week was typically scheduled with three days of operating room activities, during which I had the chance to scrub in and assist in surgeries, and two days of clinic appointments.

Prof. Hertel performed from 10 to 14 cases per week. The most common procedures being open cuff repairs and reverse shoulder arthroplasties. Other surgeries included proximal humerus, clavicle, and elbow osteosynthesis, total shoulder replacement, arthroplasty revision, arthroscopic "Bankart" repair, arthroscopic and open Mumford resection, arthroscopic decompression for calcific tendinitis, distal biceps tenodesis, and the modified Eden-Hybinette procedure. I also had the opportunity to assist in complex and less common surgeries, such as multiple shoulder arthroplasty revisions, open Latissimus Dorsi transfer, sternal body fixation, treatment of pseudoarthrosis, and the Outerbridge-Kashiwagi procedure for elbow osteoarthritis.

Throughout this experience, I appreciated not only Prof. Hertel's surgical skills and meticulous clinical examination but also the time dedicated to continuous discussion, analysis, and comparison of treated cases. Before and after each surgery in the operating room, and even during consultations in his office or over a coffee break, we took the time to carefully evaluate diagnostic imaging, treatment options, and analyze surgical techniques. Particularly useful were his suggestions and tips on prosthetic surgeries, including capsular release, baseplate position, humeral dislocation, soft tissue balancing, prosthesis reduction, and preoperative planning through software provided by Medacta.

I also valued Prof. Hertel's teachings on Rotator Cuff Tears. Although I may rarely perform an open Rotator Cuff Repair in my future practice, it could be very useful for developing my knowledge of anatomy, critical steps, and pitfalls to avoid. Certain elements of his technique are applicable to multiple surgeries, and observing the open procedure provided me with a better understanding and visualization of the goals of the arthroscopic equivalent procedure.



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For three weeks of my fellowship, I shared part of my experience with another fellow, Dr. Cameron Roth from Chicago, USA. We had a great time, not only in the operating room but also outside the hospital, during enjoyable dinners.

Lastly, this fellowship provided me with the opportunity to discover Bern and the rest of Switzerland. Bern is a clean and "green" city with a beautiful old town, well-connected to other Swiss cities and neighboring states. During my free weekends, I engaged in various outdoor activities in the nearby Thun region, visited other major cities like Geneva and Zurich, and in December, experienced the central Europe Christmas atmosphere with different Christmas Markets in Lucerne, Montreux, and Strasbourg.

I encountered no issues with the organization of my fellowship. Whenever needed, Prof. Hertel's secretaries and EFORT's delegate were ready to resolve my doubts and answer my questions. In the hospital, especially in the operating room, I consistently found a pleasant atmosphere. Despite not speaking German, communication was not a problem, as people spoke multiple languages and were always very kindly. The only "negative" aspect was Lindenhofspital lacking lodging options, and accommodation and daily life in Switzerland were expensive.

I carry with me memories of a significant experience that allowed me to explore a different health system, approaches to work, meet new people and discover a beautiful country. I also had the pleasure of working with Prof. Hertel, a surgeon with vast experience. From him, I gained practical and theoretical knowledge, as well as a passion for our surgeries and job.



Lindenhofspital in the early morning on a snowy day.



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My last day in operating room with Prof. Hertel and Nina.

Permission for publication

I agree ...

I do not agree ...

... that my report may be published on the EFORT and EFORT Foundation website and used for promotional purposes on EFORT's social media channels.