

# Report - EFORT Travelling Fellowship

Belgium  
21 – 27 April 2013

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## GRATEFUL

I wish to thank everyone for the pleasant way we were welcomed, and how in many different forms turned this experience unforgettable.

I'm grateful to SPOT who gave me this opportunity to represent my country at the EFORT Spring Travelling Fellowship, as well as to the Orthopedics e Traumatology Department of the Centro Hospitalar do Barlavento Algarvio and the Santa Maria University Hospital.

I'm also grateful to EFORT, for making possible such an experience between residents of different National Societies of Orthopedics and Traumatology, contributing to greater interaction between different countries and cultures.

Last but not least, a special acknowledgement of how we were received and welcomed at Gent, Leuven, Brussels and Spa.

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## INTRODUCTION

EFORT, as the Federation of the National Societies of Orthopedics and Traumatology, aims to improve and unify orthopedics training, continuous medical education and exchange of knowledge.

It's main objective is to support and create new personal ties to improve mutual understanding, collaboration, and to unify all the National Societies of Orthopedics and Traumatology in Europe. These objectives are achieved on one hand, by organizing congresses and instruction courses, and on the other hand, with scholarship programs. The presidents of the National Societies are invited to name their colleagues – a highly potential student in his/here last year of orthopedics training – so as to also give them the opportunity to improve their personal experience by observing, participating and discussing, as well as visiting other European countries. EFORT believes that, beyond the essential scientific activities, their program of travel fellowships allows the exchange of ideas about geography, the culture, the social systems, and the tradition of other colleagues and countries.

O EFORT Spring Travelling Fellowship 2013 occurred in Belgium, and the scientific programme in four different cities:

- Gent (April 22nd)
- Leuven (April 23rd)
- Brussels (April 24th)
- Spa (April 25th and 26th)

This program is a fine opportunity to meet colleagues from all over Europe, and also, hear and learn with the best orthopedics of the country which welcomed us.

Our Fellowship was composed of eleven people of eleven different nationalities. Fortunately, all spoke well English, which facilitated the interaction and communication with each other.

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## DAY 1 – APRIL 21st 2013 (Lisbon – Brussels)

I arrived at Brussels on Sunday, and by mistake and miscommunication with the receptionist of the hotel, I didn't go to the dinner that was scheduled for that day with all the fellows as well as the president of the Belgian Association of Orthopedics and Traumatology – Dr. Van Den Daelen and the president of the Royal Belgian Society of Orthopedic Surgery and Traumatology – Professor Schuind.

However, some fellows also didn't appear at dinner, due to delays on their flights to Brussels.

## DAY 2 – APRIL 22nd 2013 (UZ Gent)

On the second day, we went to the Gent University Hospital, where we were welcomed by Professor Victor, who invited us to the Operating Room.

The group was split up in three, into three operating rooms – hand and reconstructive surgery, hip and knee. Richard, Jose and I had the pleasure to be with Prof. Victor, where we assisted of:

- total knee prosthesis, by gonarthrosis
- an unicompartmental prosthesis in a 61 year old patient with a femorotibial gonarthrosis in the internal compartment
- internal opening tibial osteotomy

Between both surgeries, we still observed a total hip prosthesis by posterior approach, in a patient with coxarthrosis grade IV, in another room.

In the afternoon, each fellow presented a previously prepared lecture during 10 minutes, followed by a discussion, which was very interesting.

At the end of the day, Prof Victor kindly presented us with a guided tour to the centre of Gent, followed by a wonderful dinner, in a very cozy restaurant.

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## DAY 3 – APRIL 23rd 2013 (UZ Pellenberg)

On the third day we went to the Pellenberg Orthopedic Hospital, an old Asylum, in a fantastic place with great gardens around. Professor Bellemans guided the tour all around the hospital, showing us the great diversity of research facilities and optimized patient care.



On that day we also went to the Operating Room, where we had the opportunity to see:

- arthrodesis with plate in a Hallux rigidus
- triple arthrodesis due to degenerative pathology
- review of the total knee prosthesis due to periprosthetic infection
- equinus varus adductus foot in a child with cerebral palsy, having been performed a percutaneous tenotomy of the Achilles tendon, and a transfer of the anterior tibial tendon from the 1st to the 3rd cuneiform



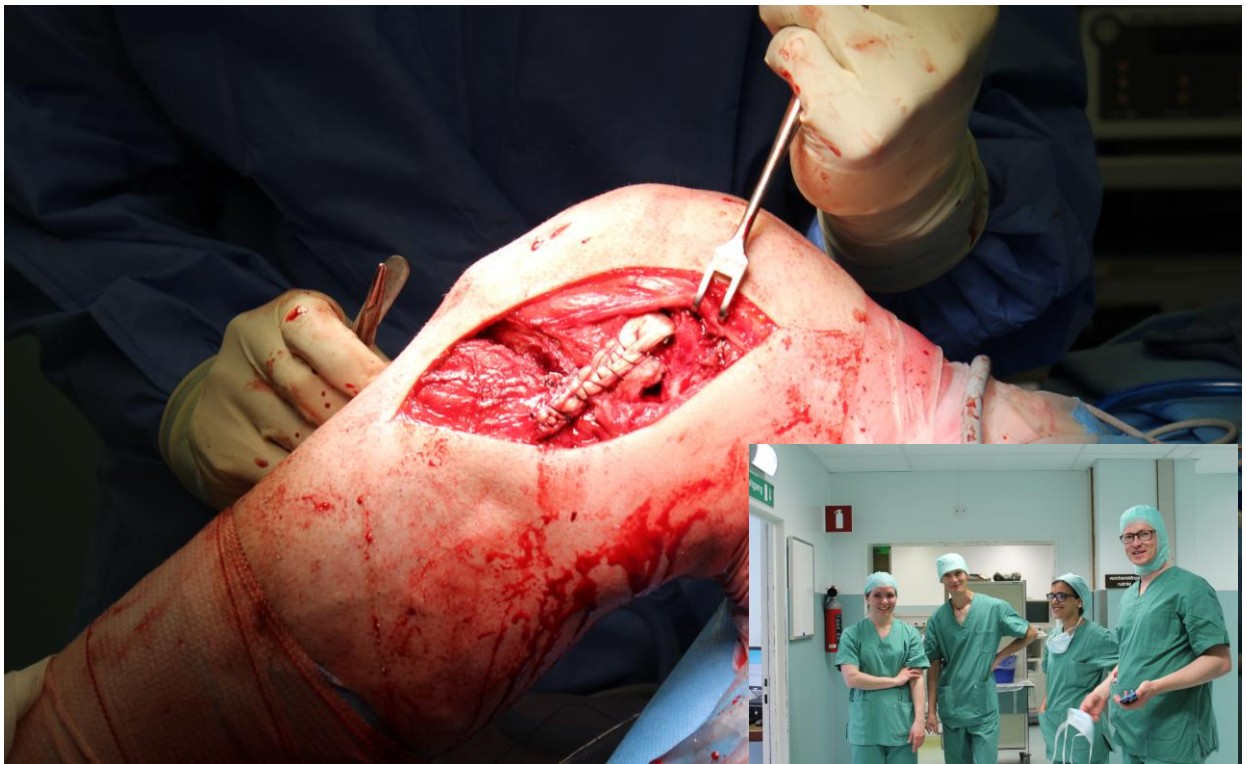
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- arthroscopy ligamentoplasty with hamstrings, and reconstruction of the lateral collateral ligament with allograft of the Achilles tendon, due to the rupture of the ACL and the lateral collateral ligament



At the end of the day, we were invited to participate in a clinical meeting in order to present and discuss the clinical reports, with great scientific interest, and where we were allowed to participate. The cases were the following:

1. sagittal imbalance after a poster-lateral lumbar arthrodesis, with proximal junctional kyphosis
2. carpal boss
3. failure of the implant in a transcervical Pauwels fracture type III in child, with the need of review and placement a valgus plate of the femur



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Later, we did a short visit to Leuven and had dinner at a typical restaurant – The Faculty Club. That restaurant, in older times could only be attended by members of the faculty or their special guests, which justifies the name.



We were hosted in a historic building that had been restored and converted into a hotel, in the historic centre of Leuven. And considering that this city has many faculty students, there was no lack of evening entertainment, as we could see after dinner.

## DAY 4 – APRIL 24th 2013 (UZ Brussels)

On the fourth day, we left Leuven and went to Brussels, where we were split into three central hospitals according to the anatomic region we preferred.

Milene, Manuel, Benjamin and I went to the Brussels University Hospital to see hip and shoulder surgeries. In the Operating Theatre, there were two rooms for orthopedic surgery, one of them with Professor Scheerlinck doing hip surgery, and in the other room shoulder pathology. Considering my interest in shoulder pathology, Milene and I had the opportunity to go to this Operating Room, where we observed:

- Mumford and subcromial decompression due to osteoarthritis of the AC joint
- tenotomy of the LPB and arthroscopic needling by calcifying tendinopathy of the shoulder at the SS
- clavicle fracture, where I had the opportunity to help and still close the surgical wound.



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After that, Prof. Scheerlinck was kind enough to present us with two fabulous lectures about pitfalls in hip arthroplasty and possible mistakes when observing a radiographic examination, which proved very instructive.



We ended the day walking along the historic centre of Brussels with the professor and had dinner at the Atomium with a superb view over Brussels.

## DAY 5 and 6 – APRIL 25th and 26th 2013 (Spa)

On the fifth and sixth day we were at a small city east from Brussels – Spa, where the Annual Meeting of the Belgian Orthopedic Society occurred, which theme was Periprosthetic Infections.

Considering the theme, a very actual issue, this meeting proved to be of great scientific and academic interest. On the first day, dinner was at a historic building in a small village near the Spa Racecourse, where we saw an exhibition of various Formula 1 cars, racing cars, and motorbikes.

On the last Congress day, we had our last dinner, and the one we miss the most. After a week of continuous interaction between a group of fantastic people, on the last dinner we were all



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much more at ease with each other, and turned this dinner into an unique one.



## DAY 7 – APRIL 27th 2013 (Brussels - Lisboa)

Transfer from Spa to the airport in Brussels.



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## CONCLUSION

During this period I had the opportunity to interact with residents coming from different European countries, sharing with them various experiences, either scientific, personal and cultural.

When I applied for this fellowship, I never imagined I would be selected. After having been selected, in spite of being very happy, I also became apprehensive, for it meant a whole week out with people I didn't know, in Belgium.

The fact that it was related, that this experience would allow the interaction between people from different countries and completely different cultures, and considering previous positive experiences of colleagues, I became more expectant.

After going through this experience, I can say that they were absolutely right, and thanks for giving me this opportunity, where I had the opportunity to create great friendships for life.