

Spring Travelling Fellowship

The Netherlands
4 – 10 October 2015

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Introduction: I come from Croatia and was sent by the Croatian Orthopaedic and Traumatology Association (COTA). I am a resident in my final year of training with the main interest in arthroplasties and periprosthetic infections. I work in Department for Orthopedic surgery at Clinical Medical Center in Zagreb which is the biggest hospital in Croatia.

Detailed description of the fellowship: Fellows from Croatian Orthopaedic and Traumatology Society have already participated in EFORT Travelling Fellowships and have all returned with great experiences. EFORT Travelling Fellowship earned a reputation of one of the best fellowships that someone can attend during residency. In that light I was thrilled when I was chosen to participate this year. Unfortunately, the flight that I took from Zagreb to Amsterdam was in a delay so I missed the dinner and social activities the first evening in Rotterdam. Nevertheless, I arrived in the hotel Emma and was very pleased with the service and the room. The next morning I met Olav and the rest of the group. After breakfast the group was on the way to the Erasmus MC hospital with the Olav in charge. We arrived on time and after the greetings from our Godfather prof. dr. Verhaar the lectures started. From the start the group was very interested in the lectures and we had thorough and detailed discussions. "The perfect ACL reconstruction" given by the dr. Duncan Meuffels made quite an impression for me. The first day we started with fellow presentations which helped in creating a nice atmosphere.

Although we all come from different countries and have different backgrounds the group developed strong and sincere relations from the start. The host surprised us with the most wonderful gift! All of us got the traditional Dutch Klompe! The first day we had a wonderful tour on bicycles through Rotterdam. It was a great fun and an exercise for us all. We found out a lot of interesting informations about the city and saw the fascinating modern architecture. The day ended in a restaurant where we had a lovely dinner and had a chance to talk and get to know each other even better.

The next day we already felt like a group of old friends on a train trip to Leyden to the LUMC hospital. The lecture about brachial plexus palsies needs to be stressed out because it was very interesting with a lot of valuable information and because that topic is always somewhat neglected. The rest of the working day was also very interesting with "bitter" discussions which meant that the topics were hot and appropriately chosen. The visit to the Leyden town followed in the afternoon. The town was an absolute discovery! It is a charming and beautiful small town with lots of canals and old buildings. We returned to Rotterdam late in the evening tired but full of impressions.

The next day was again in the Erasmus MC hospital. Finally, we were done with the fellow presentations. Of course, our hosts organized a dinner. The interesting thing was going to the dinner by a water boat taxi. The evening highlight was social activity in the White monkey bar which has a prestigious title of "the best bar in the world". The next morning we packed our things and were on train to Amsterdam. Olav was again with us making sure that all of us (almost all) arrive safely in Amsterdam. The "new" Olav in Amsterdam was Jantine who was now in charge and the responsible person for the group. We went straight to the VUMC hospital where we had a warm welcome speech by the dr. van Royen. And again we got gifts! Ties with the Dutch orthopaedic society emblem! Like the days in Rotterdam and Leyden the lectures were very interesting with dedicated lecturers. Social

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activities continued in the afternoon. We had a memorable boat trip through canals to our hotel in the center of the city. I do not need to say that the Conscious Hotel Vondelpark was fabulous. The dinner that evening was special for me because that day was my birthday. The group and hosts surprised me with the cake and singing! The atmosphere was excellent and I must thank all of them for making me feel absolutely happy. I will remember this birthday forever! Still, the next morning was working day for us, and sadly the last day. The last day brought maybe the best session of all fellowship in the AMC hospital. The talk about the sports injuries and pathology of the ankle was quite exquisite in my opinion. Like the final lecture, the final day of social life was also exquisite. We had a tour in the Red light district in Amsterdam with the guidance of a really enthusiastic guide which made this tour even more interesting! I will not talk about details because I need to be polite. It was a very unique experience. Saturday morning was all about saying goodbye and we were all sincerely sad that the fellowship already ended. Of course, we will all stay in contact and we promised to organize a meeting as soon as possible!

Conclusion:

The hosts were committed to us all day long. The transfer of knowledge and friendship that they offered was absolutely fantastic. I can not stress this enough. My sincere compliments for that.

This fellowship was an excellent opportunity to meet and develop links with colleagues throughout whole Europe. But beyond that, we arrived as group of strangers and in just 5 days become a group of good friends. That was the most valuable thing in this fellowship.