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Reported by:

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Introduction:

The spring travelling fellowship of 2016 took place in Austria between 17th-23th of April. We visited several orthopedic centers in the eastern part of Austria, incl. Vienna AKH, Speising, Medical university of Graz, Kepler universitätsklinikum Linz, and Danube University in Krems. There were a total of 14 fellows represented from Netherlands, Poland, Ukraine, Slovenia, Norway, Slovakia, Turkey, Cyprus, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Portugal and Macedonia.

It was a great honor representing Norway at this delightful event. I had the opportunity not only to increase my knowledge in current treatments in orthopedic surgery, but also to know about the systems in different European countries. But foremost the fellows representing them, hopefully good colleagues for life.

Detailed description of the fellowship

It was with great excitement I started my trip early on the 17th of April heading for Vienna, Austria. I had had the great opportunity to be selected as the Norwegian fellow for this travelling fellowship and couldn't wait to get going on this adventure. However long the trip was, with two connecting flight and several bus trips, I finally arrived at hotel Regina in the center of Vienna after twelve hours in transit. My arrival couldn't be better planned (arrived 10 min before the planned meeting with the rest of the group). I rushed to the room, meeting my roommate, Dr Figueiredo from Portugal, who seemed to be a very friendly man, had a quick shower and a change before meeting the rest. We were greeted by Prof. Nehrer who brilliantly started of the whole week with a symbolic visit to Lorenz Surgery museum, the working place for the father and founder of Orthopedic surgery in Austria. Here we got to see how orthopedic outpatient treatment was performed in the late 19th century. After that we had a nice dinner were we got to know each other briefly, then of to bed.

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Spring Travelling Fellowship

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Lorenz Surgery Museum, Vienna, Austria.

After an early rise the next morning we met up with Dr Gerhard Hobusch, our travelling host for the week. This turned out to be a very successful arrangement. He was a much appreciated travel companion, guide and always with a laugh short at hand. He took us to Vienna university hospital, AKH, for the first day's lectures. The main topic was bone and soft tissue sarcoma treatment. Overall very good lectures and I also got the opportunity to follow surgery live in the OR handling a tumor in the proximal humerus. We ended each day with presentations from the traveling fellows and I managed to do my presentation the first day, overall a nice experience to hear about how life as a resident looks in different parts of Europe.

After a long but rewarding day at AKH we had dinner in the outskirts of the Vienna amusement park, eating a nice dinner of "**Hintere Schweinsstelze**" which was a big! meal mainly constituted of meat. Funny Enugu Theres was Theo possibility of choosing small, medium or large serving but what they failed to mention was that the size referred more to size of family than portion ;)



View from the hotel Regina



Dinner at Schweizerhaus

Next day we went by minibus to another hospital in Vienna – Speising. We got a warm welcome and presented with several aspects of arthroplasty and a nice and informative tour of their gait lab. We then boarded our cruise ship of the week, the “resident bus”. A brand new full size bus with an espresso machine. Luxury when only 15 people travelling. The bus took us to Graz, as the second city of this fellowship. New hotel, new partner. This time I got to share room with Dr Van Vendeloo, a very smart and funny colleague from the Netherlands. After a nice dinner, meeting some of the professors from Graz University hospital, we went to bed for an early rise with yet a filled curriculum.

In Graz we had a more intimate meeting with the team and lectures were mixed with discussions, live surgery and another round of fellow presentations. Since this was the second tumor center in Austria, some of the lectures tended to repeat themselves at this point but nevertheless throughout good quality and a bit more resident friendly touch this time. The day ended with a guided tour of Graz, with was a well appreciated element, and rounded off with a golden dinner at an Argentinean steak house.

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Colleagues in deep concentration in the gait lab



The (P)resident bus



"Blue bubble" of Graz

The next day started with a 3 hours bus ride (much appreciated from tired travelers) to Linz with another warm welcome from prof. Böhler and colleagues. We got a tour of the outpatient clinic and many good lectures, among them a much appreciated talk from Prof. Meier from the Anesthesiology dept. speaking of "patient blood management" and how they had organized their clinical practice to avoid complications related to anemia/blood loss and transfusions.

After our penum ended that day most of the group had the opportunity to sightsee Linz in a different way, namely on segway. This was in some ways a highlight since most colleagues transformed, including me, from serious doctors into small play-happy children ☺ I don't think many of us got to see the city much though, since we were preoccupied with the fun of segway riding. We rounded of the day with a pleasant dinner at a restaurant situated at the castle, overlooking the entire city and with exquisite cuisine.



Prof. Böhler and prof. Meier in action



The Segway mafia!

The fellowship was coming to an end and the last day, after a brilliant ending in Linz with three live surgeries broadcasted in the room, along with fellows attending each surgery, we left for University of Krems and reunited with Prof Lehrer. He presented the university and gave, together with some of his PhD students, talks about their basic science work in the field of cartilage repair. Interesting topic even though it's been a while since the days of signaling pathways in medicine. The trip to the University was a beautiful experience, with mountains, castles, monasteries and the Donau outlaid for us. A short trip later we were back where it all started, at the hotel Regina in Vienna. A nice and relaxed farewell dinner later we said good bye to each other. Leaving for home again, richer in experience, both socially and professionally.

Conclusion:

The Efort Spring travelling fellowship of 2016 in Austria was a truly amazing experience. I feel honored to have had the opportunity to experience it. A well accomplished fellowship where I now sit be richened with new friends, colleagues and professional experience. I give a warm thanks to all the organizers for their hospitality and professional attitude. Good quality lectures, interesting discussions and good execution. Not to mention our travelling companion and "group father" Gerhard Hobusch!

I would also like to thank Efort for this initiative to give the younger orthopedic surgeons a chance to broaden their perspectives and associate with others in the same situation across Europe.

I give this travelling fellowship my warmest recommendation and I hope it will continue for years to come.

Erik Sundqvist