

REPORT

Fall Travelling Fellowship

Turkey, October 2017

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Introduction: I can comfortably say that I spent maybe the most inspiring week in professional career this past week in Turkey. Having the opportunity to be part of the EFORT Travelling Fellowship gave me the opportunity to see up close how orthopedics and trauma are done in another country, to expand my knowledge and professional horizons, to compare me and my country to others and last but not least – to make new friendships.

Detailed description of the fellowship:



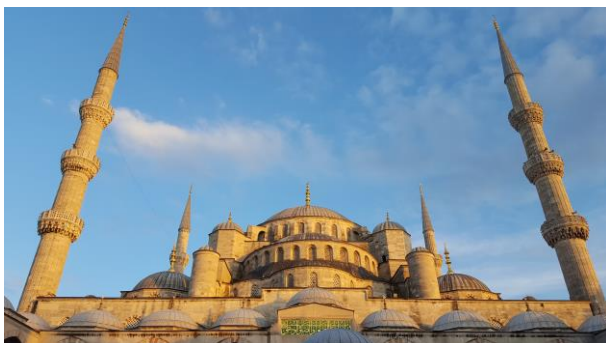
I was not quite sure what to expect from this travelling fellowship experience. I imagined it would be a dry, purely scientific program from 8a.m. to 8p.m. with virtually no time for anything but trauma and orthopedics. And then, when I first got the schedule and saw that we were to be in a different hospital every day I said to myself "Well, that can't be right. What is the purpose of this event if we change places every day? What can I learn in a few hours? How am I to dwell in the details, when I won't have the time to get through the basics?" And there was my problem. I couldn't grasp the true purpose of a **travelling** fellowship. It's not just a fellowship. It's so much more... Let me tell you how this week in Turkey went for me and then I am sure, you won't ever make my mistake.

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Day 1 - Arrival

As we were all flying in from different countries, the first day was all about getting to the hotel in the beautiful city of Istanbul. We had no scientific schedule for the day, and while most of the other fellows were tired from the travel or were yet to arrive, our TOTBID guide, myself and a fellow from Croatia went for a walk in the rainy streets of the city. Having been to Istanbul on holiday before, I was not expecting anything new. We managed to grab a bite on the streets and went into this local sports bar. The atmosphere there was what surprised me the most – friendly, mostly middle-aged men (no women), watching the game together. Having a nice conversation, even though rooting for different teams. It was filled with adrenaline and tension and yet it was strangely soothing.

And that was the theme for the entire fellowship for me – new experiences, new and friendly people and pleasant surprises where you least expect them.

Days 2-4 Istanbul (Bezmialem University, Istanbul University, Acibadem University)

Upon arrival at the beautiful campus of Bezmialem University, we started the first true day of our fellowship with a swift introduction of ourselves and some welcome remarks from Prof. Halit Pinar, the current TOTBID president. After a brief case discussion we finally got to the operating theaters. Every fellow could choose which case he or she wanted to watch, but was free to change operating rooms whenever he wanted. The expertise of the faculty astonished us all. They managed to complete their respective cases in less than half the time we expected it would take them. Of course that meant more time for questions. And the faculty members were as eager to answer as we were to ask. During lunch we got to know each other. Now with some general knowledge of how the day of a Turkish orthopedic surgeon was structured, we started to discuss and compare the similarities and differences in each fellow's own country. What followed (after a nice lunch) were a series of great lectures. And each day that followed did not disappoint. From discussing a wide variety of topics during the lecture course, to interesting cases in the OR and bonding with the other fellows. In Istanbul University I got to enjoy one of my favorite lectures of the program – Distraction osteogenesis. The next day during our training at Acibadem University, we had the opportunity to do primary and revision knee arthroplasty on cadaveric specimens – a luxury that to my knowledge is available only at master level courses. With in-depth





knowledge and many tips and tricks my understanding of the procedures was greatly expanded. The faculty and especially assoc. professor Kucukdurmaz dedicated their time to further stretch our views on scientific opportunities and research. Even though we had a tight schedule during the day, our program allowed us to have enough free time in the evening to explore the city, with its beautiful cultural and architectural monuments like Hagia Sophia, the Egyptian obelisk, Topkapi saray (palace). And of course enjoy the night life, including an outstanding dinner with the faculty in an amazing restaurant on the bank of the Bosphorus, nargile (water pipe, shisha) near the city center and many more.

Days 5 and 6 – Ankara (Hacettepe University, Saglik Bilimleri University)



In Hacettepe we dwelled on the topics of DDH and ACL ruptures. And while the week so far was filled with a lot of orthopedics and little trauma, everything changed when we arrived at Gulhane hospital the next day. They awaited us with a plethora of different pathology first thing in the morning – from pediatric trauma (supracondylar fracture), to THA and an impressive amount of gunshot injuries. Being part of the morning round gave us the opportunity to not only see these patients like pieces of paper or an x-ray, but to actually talk to them, and assess their clinical condition. What followed was a trip to the Medical design & manufacturing center – a place where they have the means to implement cutting edge 3D printing technology to make custom implants for complex cases

where traditional ones just won't do the job. After that there was a faculty organized trip to Ataturk monument with a professional guide. This was truly an experience I would recommend to all visiting Ankara. You get to learn a lot about modern Turkish history, while admiring the actions of the founding father of the republic.

Just a couple of hours later was an impressive kebab bar with exquisite food and the evening continued on high note in a nargile bar in the center of Ankara.

Day 7 – Departure

To my regret the fellowship had ended. We exchanged contacts, more than a few hugs and went our separate ways.



Conclusion:

I was not sure what to expect of this fellowship. But I can tell you what I got out of it. An eye-opening experience. A chance to expand and compare my personal and national level of orthopedics to some of the best in Europe. The opportunity to meet amazing faculty members which effortlessly urged me to follow the passion I already have for orthopedics and trauma and made me want to be a part of such a great community as EFFORT even more. And of course – the privilege to make new friendships with some phenomenal people, that I think it is safe to say, will be for life.