

ESDO TRAINEE FELLOWSHIP REPORT 2020



Name of Fellow: Alexander Vanden Bulcke
Country of Origin: Belgium
Fellowship Institute: Uniklinik Ulm
Fellowship Host: **Professor T. Seufferlein**
Date of Fellowship: 28 september - 23 oktober 2020

Report:

Between two corona peaks, I had the opportunity to come to the Uniklinik Ulm for 4 weeks in this special year that is dominated by COVID19. I was warmly welcomed by Prof Seufferlein and his team and I had the opportunity to fill in my program according to my interests in the digestive oncology field. The Uniklinik Ulm is a Comprehensive Cancer Centre treating all types of digestive tumours and there is access to many national and international clinical trials. My program was organised as followed: In the morning, I mostly followed the consultations at the outpatient clinic: Discussing interim oncological evaluation with patients, patients coming with a new diagnosis, clarifications of tumour board decisions to patients, external referrals for second opinion, people starting or coming for in interim visit in a clinical trial, Clinical checkups under oral cancer therapy, follow up visits after curative treatments etc. I had the opportunity to prepare the patient files in advance and between the consultations, I could ask questions and discuss the cases with the treating physicians. There were multiple multidisciplinary meetings during the week that I could attend: Once a week, there was a meeting with the radiologist/nuclear medicine for clarification of difficult radiologic images in gastroenterology/oncology; Once a week, there were two digestive oncologic tumour boards – one for digestive oncology in general and one dedicated to neuroendocrine tumours; Fortnightly, there was a molecular tumour board. Some of the patients that I had seen in the outpatient or inpatient clinic were addressed in these meetings. Once in the week, I joined the visit of the inpatient clinic during the Chef round. During my stay, I took the opportunity to get in touch with related disciplines of the oncologic treatment landscape where I am less familiar with: I followed some days at the radiotherapy and the nuclear medicine department, I observed major abdominal oncologic surgery in the operation theatre and I have spend an afternoon in the molecular pathology laboratory where I was kindly introduced to the world of Next Generation Sequencing. During my stay at the nuclear medicine department, I learned about the emerging field of theranostics and I followed the admission of patients coming for PRRT. I also spend some time in the well-established ultrasound department (a collaboration between gastroenterologists and radiologists) where I was surprised by their commitment and extended use of ultrasound for diagnostics and therapeutics.

To conclude this very interesting period: During my stay, I challenged and extended my view on digestive oncology by experiencing how oncology is practiced here by highly motivated people in a dedicated cancer centre and I got more insight in the related disciplines of the oncology field. I am very grateful to ESDO and to all the people I have met for their great effort and their generous hospitality to me. It was a great experience to be here.

