

## **Final Report- EBCOG fellowship 2012**

With the generous support of the EBCOG fellowship, I was able to spend three months of my residency at the University Gynaecological Hospital of Heidelberg in Germany, with a special focus on malignant gynaecological surgery.

Since my current employment at the South General Hospital in Stockholm does not offer treatment for malignant gynaecological neoplasms, I found myself longing to learn more about the care and management of patients affected by these cancers, be it during clinical consultations or in the operating room. Thanks to the EBCOG fellowship, I was given the unique opportunity to improve my surgical skills and enrich my medical training so to offer the best kind of care for my patients.

I obtained my medical degree from the Karl-Ruprecht University in Heidelberg a few years ago and with an already established network at the University Gynaecological Hospital of Heidelberg, a renowned oncology centre, I had a strong desire to return as a resident to refine my training.

Professor Dr Sohn, Head of the department, and his team were very welcoming and offered me unparalleled teachings.

The daily work in the OR exposed me to a variety of procedures: minimal invasive laparoscopy, laparoscopic hysterectomies, radical hysterectomies, wide resections of vulva cancer, resections of pelvic masses and surgical staging including pelvic and aortic lymph node sampling. Even more impressive was to assist in rare operations such as resection of adenocarcinoma of the fallopian tubes or a vaginal reconstruction for a woman with Mayer-Rokitansky-Küster-Hauser-syndrome.

It was fantastic to observe the surgeons operating but even more exciting when I was taught how to carry out some steps of the surgery myself. Holding all those instruments, cutting and coagulating with the aim to heal the patient from her cancer gave me a kick of adrenaline. My mentor, Dr Rom, was always encouraging and supportive and helped me build up my confidence and independence in the OR.

Another very positive surprise was that I could participate at two training courses. The first one was a two-day long colposcopy course lead by the very famous and didactic Hungarian Doctor Szalay, who has significant experience in the field of cervical dysplasia. He showed us thousands of his colourful pictures, macroscopic anatomy and histology slides documented at his centre in Győr.

The other course was an interdisciplinary hands-on-training course on pigs under general anaesthesia. General surgeons, urologists and gynaecologists were given the opportunity to learn and to practice different challenging techniques, such as hysterectomy, stoma, lymph node extirpation, deperitonialisation. A fantastic training and priceless experience.

I have to say that the length of the fellowship was absolutely perfect. Those three months allowed me to become a member of the team, exposed me to a wide spectrum of different operations and surgical techniques and management of patients with gynaecological neoplasms.

My time in Heidelberg gave me a deeper insight on the structure of German healthcare and German work ethic with its goal-oriented focus on effectiveness and exactness. Impressive and tireless!

Apart from the long working days in the OR, Heidelberg also offers endless opportunities to spend some great leisure time. Known for being German's oldest University-city, it offers a wide range of activities for young people.

In summary, I wish to express my gratitude towards Dr Rom and Dr Schütz for their support and invaluable teaching. The EBCOG fellowship has been an ideal learning experience and a great opportunity that I strongly recommend to all my European colleagues who wish to gain insight on any subspecialty.

*Auf Wiedersehen!*  
*Dr Elisabeth Vock*