

## **ENTOG-EBCOG Fellowship 2024 - Final Report**

My name is **Athina Samara**, and I am in my final year of training in Obstetrics and Gynecology. I was honored to be selected for the EBCOG short-term fellowship scholarship for 2024, which allowed me to spend three transformative months at **San Raffaele Hospital** in Milan, Italy. Under the guidance of esteemed mentors and a highly specialized team, I had the privilege of gaining hands-on experience in **Urogynecology, the diagnosis and treatment of pelvic floor disorders, and minimally invasive surgical techniques.**

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude for the invaluable opportunity of participating in the ENTOG-EBCOG Fellowship. This experience has significantly expanded my medical knowledge, fostered international collaboration, enhanced my language skills, and provided insights into diverse cultural approaches to patient care.

### **Clinical and Educational Experience**

During my fellowship at San Raffaele Hospital, I also had the opportunity to participate in the **Congenital Female Genital Anomalies Special Clinic**, with a particular focus on **Rokitansky Syndrome**. As San Raffaele Hospital serves as a referral center for congenital anomalies in Italy, I was able to observe and engage in the multidisciplinary management of these complex cases, including diagnostic evaluation, surgical planning, and long-term follow-up of patients.

During my fellowship at San Raffaele Hospital, I was immersed in a dynamic and innovative medical environment where I had the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of clinical and surgical procedures. My weekly schedule encompassed:

- **Urogynecology Consultations** – Participating in patient evaluations, learning about diagnostic approaches for pelvic floor disorders, and gaining insights into treatment strategies for conditions such as pelvic organ prolapse and urinary incontinence.
- **Urodynamic Testing and Diagnosis** – Assisting in performing urodynamic studies to assess bladder function and better understand lower urinary tract dysfunction.
- **Minimally Invasive Surgical Techniques** – Observing and assisting in laparoscopic and vaginal procedures.
- **Ultrasound Imaging** – Enhancing my skills in pelvic ultrasound for the assessment of urogynecological conditions and postoperative follow-ups.
- **Multidisciplinary Team Meetings** – Attending case discussions involving urogynecologists, and physiotherapists to develop comprehensive patient management plans.

### **Research and Innovation**

San Raffaele Hospital is renowned for its commitment to medical research and innovation. Throughout my fellowship, I had the opportunity to engage in ongoing studies in **urogynecology, surgical techniques for prolapse repair, and conservative management of pelvic floor disorders**. Exposure to cutting-edge advancements reinforced my understanding of evidence-based practice and the importance of continuous learning in this evolving field.

## **Multicultural Exposure and Patient-Centered Care**

Milan, as a vibrant and diverse city, offered me the chance to interact with patients from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Each case required a personalized and sensitive approach, reinforcing the importance of tailoring medical management to individual needs while respecting different cultural perspectives on urogynecological health.

## **Conclusion**

This fellowship has sparked a deep interest in **urogynecology**, inspiring me to further explore and specialize in this field. The comprehensive exposure to both clinical and surgical aspects of urogynecology, along with the invaluable mentorship I received, has solidified my passion for this specialty and my commitment to advancing patient care in this area.

I would like to extend my special thanks to **Professor Stefano Salvatore**, who was my supervisor throughout the fellowship. His unwavering guidance, kindness, and enthusiasm made my experience truly enriching. I am also deeply grateful to **Professor Massimo Candiani** for welcoming me into the department and allowing me to be a part of this outstanding team. Their support and mentorship were invaluable in shaping my learning journey.

Moreover, during my time at San Raffaele Hospital, I participated in the **Journal Club** and other educational activities of the department. These sessions provided me with the opportunity to engage in critical discussions, stay updated with the latest advancements in the field, and enhance my academic and clinical knowledge.

This fellowship has been a **transformative milestone** in my medical career, deepening my expertise in urogynecology and shaping my future aspirations. I am

profoundly grateful to my mentors and the entire team at San Raffaele Hospital for their **guidance, patience, and unwavering support**. Their dedication to excellence and compassionate patient care has inspired me to pursue further specialization in this field.

Finally, I would like to thank **ENTOG and EBCOG** for providing this exceptional learning opportunity. The experience gained during these three months will undoubtedly influence my future practice, allowing me to contribute meaningfully to the field of urogynecology.

**Kind regards,**

Athina Samara, MD, MSc