

TRAINING BURSARY PROGRAMME REPORT (2019)

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Training bursary programme destination: University of Düsseldorf (UDUS), Germany

1) What was the motivation to apply for training in this Centre?

I decided to apply for a SLE training bursary because I was interested in studying one of the rarer complications of SLE, pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), that affects around 1-4% of patients with SLE. Due to the low prevalence of the complication, a monocentric project has significant limitations; whereas, sharing patients and experience in a multicentric collaboration is the best solution to tackle this issue. The SLE training bursary was the perfect occasion to establish a close collaboration with a European world-renowned centre with a strong background on SLE as the “Poliklinik und Funktionsbereich für Rheumatologie” at the Düsseldorf Universitätsklinikum. The goal of my project was to study patients with SLE-PAH, and to screen patients with SLE and identify variables that may select patient with SLE at risk of developing PAH.

2) How the objectives were fulfilled by the training?

The training programme fulfilled completely the objectives of my study. I was able to recruit the predetermined number of patients for PAH screening and to characterize patients with SLE-PAH. The success was granted by the close cooperation of the colleagues and mentors at the Rheumatology Unity of the Düsseldorf Universitätsklinikum, the availability of the other specialty doctors for collaborating on the project and the significant number of patients who are cared at this centre.

3) What are the main opportunities / strengths this centre offers for future applicants?

UKD is one of the most important rheumatological centre in Germany and Europe, with a vast cohort of SLE patients, and is one of the SLEuro centres, with a high specialization to treat patients with SLE. Moreover, UKD has excellent medical and surgical specialty departments that makes it easier to work on multidisciplinary projects. All these reasons make the UKD as a perfect centre to carry out research projects and learn in depth about the advanced management of patients with SLE.

4) Practical advice for future applicants to the SLEuro training bursary

The SLEuro training bursary is an excellent occasion for experiencing one of the best European centres for SLE. I highly recommend to apply for the training bursary if someone is interested in specializing in the management of patients with SLE or would like to carry out a research project. I advise future applicants to have a clear idea of the aim they would like to achieve: 8 weeks is a relatively limited time, many things can be accomplished but it is important not to waste time, to be focused and to organize work very efficiently so to complete all the desired tasks in the allowed time frame.