



ESGO Traveling Fellowship Fellows Report

Name of Fellow: Renee Vina G. Sicam, MD

Position at Home Institution: Clinical Associate Professor

Home Institution (full address): Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Section of Gynecologic Oncology, University of the Philippines-College of Medicine, Philippine General Hospital, Taft Avenue, Manila, Philippines

Head of the Department: Efren J. Domingo, MD, PhD

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Name of Mentor at Host Institution: David Cibula, MD, PhD, Professor

Position at Host Institution: Head of the Gynecologic Oncology Center,

Institution (full address): Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, General Teaching Hospital, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Email: dc@davidcibula.cz

Dates of Fellowship: May 2-31, 2018

Detailed description on Teaching received:

On my first day, I observed Prof. Dr. David Cibula at the out-patient gynecologic oncology clinic. As consultations were conducted in Czech, he explained to me note-worthy cases and the rationale for the management. I was asked about my expectations from the fellowship, which was mainly learning techniques in radical surgeries, as well as laparoscopic surgery for gynecologic cancer. We had clinical discussions primarily on the management of cervical cancer during this time and other days of my stay. I learned several valuable concepts in these short teaching sessions with him.

In the course of the fellowship, I was able to assist Prof. Cibula in primary and secondary de-bulking procedures. He would annotate the steps of the procedure as he would perform them, much like in published surgical videos, and would later answer questions and give tips about surgical techniques. I was also able to participate in the various surgeries of Prof. Dr. Jiri Slama, Dr. Anna Germinova and other doctors. I saw how the SENTIX trial for cervical cancer was being conducted, as some patients were participating in the study.

On days without surgery or when they would end early, I observed Dr. Daniela Fischerova perform ultrasound staging of gynecologic cancer. Dr. Fischerova would describe her findings as she systematically scanned the patients and later would explain to us her recommendations. I was able to see patients who were being enrolled in the IOTA Study and patients who underwent tru-cut biopsy. We were very fortunate to be invited to attend the 5th International Workshop on Ultrasound in Gynecologic Oncology held in the hospital, which complimented the ultrasound rotation. The scientific program also incorporated clinical correlations, which made the workshop more meaningful to me as an oncologist. On some days, I also observed laparoscopic surgery for cervix and endometrial cancer by Dr. Michal Mara of the endoscopy service.

I attended weekly tumor boards. Although they were conducted in Czech, I could still follow the discussion since the cases were projected on a screen, and I had seen some of the patients in the operating room or out-patient department. There was also a designated doctor who would translate for us. I likewise joined the team during morning bedside rounds on Mondays and we saw patients who were for surgery that week or those who had not gone home from the previous week.

Goals accomplished:

1. Assisted and/or observed radical surgeries, such as anterior pelvic exenteration, en-bloc resection of pelvic tumor with anterior/posterior peritonectomy, sigmoid resection-anastomosis, splenectomy, diaphragm resection, liver resection, ureteral anastomosis, radical hysterectomy, radical parametrectomy, total vaginectomy, bladder and bowel repair.
2. Assisted and/or observed diagnostic laparoscopy, laparoscopic sentinel node biopsy, open surgical staging for ovarian cancer (total omentectomy, pelvic and para-aortic lymphadenectomy), vaginal hysterectomy, simple trachelectomy and vulvar excisions.
3. Rotated with expert gynecologic oncologic sonologist.
4. Observed laparoscopic radical hysterectomy and sentinel node biopsy, and other laparoscopic procedures by expert endoscopists.
5. Observed in out-patient gynecologic oncology clinic and weekly tumor boards.

Achievement in clinical practice:

Review of pelvic and abdominal anatomy relevant to surgery for female genital tract malignancies.

Broadened knowledge of surgical techniques.

Knowledge of the method and application of expert ultrasound in staging of gynecologic cancer.

Application of ESGO Guidelines in management of cervical, ovarian and endometrial cancer.

Knowledge of how a specialized referral center for gynecologic oncology in Europe is run.

Presentations eg. at seminar or meetings: None

Research performed and outcome: None

Publications: None

Problems encountered with a critical evaluation of the fellowship experience as a whole:

Although we were oriented as to where the clinical areas were located, such as the oncology ward, ultrasound, operating rooms, out-patient clinic etc., it was not made clear what the daily activities for the week would be. I was able to cope by just asking anyone from the team as needed. On the bright side, it gave me some freedom to decide what I wanted to see for the day. Still, it would have helped to have a detailed orientation and assignment at the beginning of the fellowship.

During my fellowship, we had several young doctors and another gynecologic oncology intern from the Czech Republic in the service. In effect, the chance to assist in surgical cases were divided among us. Nevertheless, the opportunity to learn was still there since I observed the cases I was not scrubbed in. Eventually I was able to assist in a sufficient amount of cases.

The language barrier was a given limitation of the fellowship, as most of the communication was in Czech. I appreciate the efforts of the doctors who apprised me of the relevant information of the cases. Some learning points must have been lost during the discussion of the patients in the rounds and tumor boards, but this was inevitable.

Future plan on returning to home:

Apply different techniques in radical surgery observed from the fellowship in my own surgeries and impart these to our trainees.

Collaborate with a specialized sonologist in pre-operative staging of patients.

Study the feasibility of sentinel node biopsy in cervical and endometrial cancer in my country.

Continue laparoscopic staging of patients with endometrial cancer.

Overall evaluation and comment of the fellowship:

I learned a lot from the fellowship. A stay of more than a month would have been even better, so as to be exposed to more surgical procedures and perhaps have a presentation or publication. It also goes without saying that Prague is a beautiful city to live.

I highly recommend fellowship in this institution for young gynecologic oncologists who would like to experience first hand a high-volume, patient-centered, research-oriented gynecologic cancer referral center, with highly skilled gynecologic surgeons, expert sonologists and subspecialists. I thank ESGO for granting me support for this fellowship. Lastly, I sincerely thank Prof. Cibula for being a very approachable, insightful, and generous teacher. Even with my short stay as a mentee, I am certain that the fellowship will make me a better doctor for my patients and teacher to our trainees.

In

Date June 5, 2018

RENEE VINA G. SICAM, MD

Applicant's name (in capital letters)

Signature:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Renee Vina G. Sicam".

Enjoy learning with ESGO!