

TRAINING BURSARY PROGRAMME REPORT (2021)

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Training bursary programme destination: Centre de Référence Maladies Rares, Hôpital Cochin (Paris)

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

The most important reason that prompted me to submit the application for a SLE training bursary was my interest in the management of pregnancy patients affected by systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), in particular in those with renal involvement. While during the past, pregnancy has been discouraged in women with lupus nephritis (LN), due to the high risk of maternal and fetal complications, today pregnancy outcome has improved dramatically over time and pregnancy is no longer considered contraindicated.

The SLE training bursary was extremely rewarding and stimulating for me to practice on managing pregnant women with SLE. Moreover, it was a perfect occasion for consolidate my experience in this medical field, learning from experienced practitioners.

This gave me a unique opportunity to establish a close collaboration with Centre de Référence Maladies Rares-Hopital Cochin de Paris, which is a world-renowned group with a strong expertise in this area, and Prof. Nathalie Costedoat-Chalumeau is one of the most important experts worldwide.

During my residency, I have been actively involved in an observational study based on a prospective register collecting data on pregnant women affected by rare and/or rheumatological diseases, including SLE and antiphospholipid syndrome. The aim of the study was to assess the risk and to identify the possible risk factors for renal flare in SLE pregnant women with previous lupus nephritis and in those without history of renal involvement.

2) How the objectives were fulfilled by the training?

My training period at the Centre de Référence Maladies Rares-Hopital Cochin de Paris gave me the opportunity to join both clinical practice and research activities.

The clinical activity included the participation in the specialized outpatient clinic for rare diseases, under the supervision of Prof. Nathalie Costedoat-Chalumeau. During my stay, I had the chance to participate in the care of several cases of pregnant patients with Lupus, which enhanced my knowledge on the management and follow-up of this complex clinical setting. I also gained experience in other challenging SLE manifestations, as well as in cases of secondary antiphospholipid syndrome (APS) who were also seen at the clinic.

Beside clinical practice, I also appreciated the strong collaboration among team members as well as their consolidated organization in the different aspects of team working.

Furthermore, I participated in the various scientific meetings organized by the Department, which included discussion of complex clinical cases and meetings with the radiologists of Cochin Hospital. Through these activities, I acquired a better insight on how one of the EULAR Centres of Excellence for SLE is organized, also in terms of multidisciplinary approach for complex systemic conditions.

I would like to adopt some of the methods I learnt to better organize our outpatient clinic and to improve the clinical management and the research network.

Regarding my research activity, I was involved in an observational study based on a prospective register collecting data on pregnant women affected by rare and/or rheumatological diseases, including SLE and antiphospholipid syndrome. The aim of the study was to assess the risk and to identify the possible risk factors for renal flare in SLE pregnant women with previous lupus nephritis and in those without history of renal involvement. We expect to submit these results in a manuscript for publication in an international journal in the next months.

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

The Centre de Référence Maladies Rares-Hopital Cochin de Paris is an international reference center for the care of patients with immune-mediated disorders, with a vast cohort of SLE and APS patients, and is one of the SLEuro Centres, with a high specialization to treat patients with SLE during pregnancy. Prof. Nathalie Costedoat-Chalumeau is one of the most important experts worldwide with a great experience in the management of SLE patients. Her talent for seemingly effortlessly managing so many different critical conditions and the projects from her research group are engaging.

Moreover, the whole team was kind and very open to collaboration, and prone to share their experience and expertise. The Centre de Référence Maladies Rares-Hopital Cochin de Paris is a perfect centre to carry out research projects focusing on the advanced management of patients with SLE and APS.

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 in this field. I advise future applicants to approach this experience in an open-minded attitude, with the willingness to learn and to get involved in new efforts. At the end, I am sure this experience could be a great opportunity for both the personal and professional growth.