

TRAINING BURSARY PROGRAMME REPORT (2021)

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Training bursary program destination : Centre Hospitalier Universitaire (CHU) de Bordeaux (Bordeaux)

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

To begin, the ability to observe patients of all ethnic backgrounds would help me to better understand how to manage SLE. We, as Japanese physicians, typically lack expertise with patients who are not of Japanese ethnicity. Although we treat relatively few patients of other ethnicities, we occasionally become perplexed when treating these non-Asian patients with serious diseases. In addition, ethnicity affects physical examination findings, treatment plan considerations, and patient outcomes. Second, this program has allowed me to hone my research skills. To date, my primary focus has been on my clinical abilities, and I have only recently begun conducting clinical research. I wanted to develop my skills and gain experience designing various types of studies that are difficult to design at my facility. Furthermore, I felt that increasing my collaboration network to become an international one would be profitable for future studies.

2) How were the objectives fulfilled by the training?

In terms of clinical abilities, Prof. Richez graciously allowed me to participate in their outpatient clinic and hospitalized patient practices. I saw patients three to four days a week in the outpatient clinic and twice a week during ward patient rounds. Following patient consultations, we discussed treatment plans. We mainly saw patients with joint and skin involvement in the outpatient clinic. I have learned about maintenance treatment for SLE. The differences in the medical care provision systems, particularly in medical insurance, intrigued me because they are related to the choice of expensive medications for rheumatic disease. They responded to my inquiries promptly, and I understood their reasoning. They shared cases when I participated in numerous daily clinical duties such as ultrasound, joint injections, and physical therapy. On other days, I had the opportunity to visit another large hospital in Bordeaux, Haut-Lévêque Hospital. In France, internal medicine doctors also see patients with rheumatic diseases. At this hospital in particular, I learned about patients with systemic complications and patient care during pregnancy. Prof. Lazaro of the Department of General Internal Medicine also discussed complex and systemic disease cases of vasculitis and catastrophic anti-phospholipid syndrome. In addition, I learned a great deal about pregnant patients with lupus. Prof. Lazaro taught me about the management of pregnancy, hydroxychloroquine usage, and anticoagulant usage. Dr. Barnetche also assisted me during this period in performing a meta-analysis of hydroxychloroquine usage in pregnancy. He instructed me considerably in the study design including collecting and analyzing the data. I also received other advice from his colleagues. I have been preparing to publish this study. I also attended a variety of scientific meetings that taught me how French physicians interact with other European nations.

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

This program at this center exposed me to various cases of SLE. Not only was I able to experience cases involving the skin and joints but I was also able to encounter more severe and complex cases as this hospital is one of the largest in France. Although I did not have much time, there were many resources available. You can participate in basic or translational research and will be supervised by sophisticated mentors. As this is a university hospital, a large number of medical students and residents assist each other and develop their skills. You can learn about medical education. In any field, if you wish to improve your skills, this university will accommodate you.

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

The SLE bursary program is one of the best ways to gain clinical and research experience at a leading international institute in Europe. As previous bursary recipients have stated, eight weeks is a very brief period to master one topic. Prioritizing what you want to accomplish and defining your purpose are critical. It is preferable to contact each department to clarify your objectives. Before beginning the program, you should prepare a two-month plan.

I have no words to express my gratitude for this opportunity. Prof. Christophe Richez kindly welcomed me and provided me with numerous opportunities to observe their great practice. That made it easier for me to accomplish my goal of expanding my expertise.

Please apply for this program if you are interested in honing your skills.