

TRAINING BURSARY PROGRAMME REPORT

Sofía Álvarez Villalobos

Internal Medicine Department, Marqués de Valdecilla University Hospital, Santander, Spain

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

1. What was the motivation to apply for training in this Center? / Main objectives

Autoimmune diseases are part of the differential diagnosis of many pathologies and different syndromes. One of the tasks of the internist is the framing of the symptoms and signs that a patient presents within a pathology in order to provide the most appropriate treatment; therefore, knowledge of the different autoimmune diseases is essential to be able to diagnose them.

Even if the Marqués de Valdecilla University Hospital has a strong Rheumatology service, the teaching of autoimmune pathology within the Internal Medicine service is deficient and clearly represents a field for improvement. Although we rotate in the second year of residency in the Rheumatology service, we are only there for two months and mainly in the Emergency Department and the Hospitalization, so there are many aspects of these pathologies that are hardly addressed during the residency.

As a physician, I have always felt attracted to this type of pathology, both because of the variety of clinical pictures it produces and because of the difficulty sometimes involved in its diagnosis. For all these reasons, I considered it essential to have a proper training in autoimmune pathologies in order to strengthen my knowledge in this field. Since the year 2022 I have been studying a Master's Degree in Autoimmune Diseases of the SEMI-GEAS-UAB, and I believe that being able to attend a Specialized Center would help me to consolidate and put into practice all this knowledge which, without a doubt, will be of great use in my future work and will allow me to provide better clinical assistance.

2. How were the objectives fulfilled by the training? / Description of activities

During my stage I was able to participate in the diagnosis and treatment of patients with autoimmune diseases. The stage was divided in two different departments: Internal Medicine and Rheumatology. This has given me the opportunity of seeing the clinical practice from two different ways. The first month I was at Pellegrin Hospital in a Rheumatology Department, and the following one at Haut-Lévêque Hospital in the Internal Medicine Department. In both hospitals I could participate in the different assistance activities of the Departments, such as conventional hospitalization, clinical rounds, outpatient consultation and case sessions.

The conventional hospitalization floor is organized by teams, made up of residents from various specialties, students, and supervised by two specialists. Patients are discussed daily, and once a week they are reviewed in-depth by Professor Richez or Professor Lazaro.

I could also assist to consultation in both hospitals. This allowed me to participate in the treatment of patients with various autoimmune diseases.

3. What are the main opportunities / strengths this center offers for future applicants?

I was able to improve my skills in autoimmune diseases and I could assist to a clinical practice different from the one I am used to in my hospital, so it has been a great experience not only to learn about autoimmune diseases but also to know about the operation of another hospital.

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

The SLE bursary program is a great way to gain clinical experience at a leading international institute in Europe. Even if the stage is only eight weeks it allows you to improve clinical skills at an international center with experience in autoimmune diseases. I recommend every person interested in autoimmune diseases to apply for this bursary.