

Learning and Carrying Skills Forward

Reflections from an ACG International GI Training Grant Recipient



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As a GI physician at Hospital

Clinic in Barcelona, Spain, I did my fellowship on endoscopic ultrasound (EUS) and endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), with Dr. Angels Gines, Coordinator of the European Group for Endoscopic Ultrasonography, and Dr. Andres Cardenas, respectively.

Over the last few years, our department undertook a profound functional renewal of clinical and research settings. I was assigned to the important task of developing new areas of interest in interventional endoscopy. Our center is one of the most important European centers in liver diseases and liver transplantation, and is a Spanish reference center in pancreatic surgery

There was significant interest in developing EUS-guided interventional procedures such as EUS-guided pancreatic fluid collections drainage, EUS-guided biliary and pancreatic duct drainage, or EUS-guided angiotherapy. These procedures are safe, efficient and provide significant advantages over percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography or surgical drainage. The avoidance of more-invasive procedures results in substantial health care cost savings and improved quality

of life. However, these procedures are technically complex and should be confined to major referral centers.

I was selected to attend the International Scholars Program in Advanced Endoscopy at California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) for a period of 12 months, between March 2014 and April 2015. The purpose of my stay at CPMC was to both hone and provide the necessary skills to perform these interventional procedures, and then develop this particular area at my center.

The International Scholars Program at CPMC offered training under the supervision of Dr. Kenneth Binmoeller and his fantastic group of endoscopists and nurses, including Dr. Janak Shah, Dr. Yasser Bhat and Dr. Chris Hamerski. Dr. Binmoeller is world renowned for his expertise in interventional endoscopy. Furthermore, he is the creator of a luminal apposing metal stent which, in my opinion, has started a new era in interventional endoscopy.

The training program included a broad spectrum of interventional endoscopic procedures. This resulted in the performance of approximately 500 EUS-FNA, 250 ERCP, 60 EUS-guided interventional procedures, and a significant number of other techniques such as endoscopic closure of gastrointestinal defects, underwater resection of colonic polyps, and endoscopic therapy of subepithelial lesions, among other procedures.

The research block included the data collection, data analysis and manuscript of two studies about closure of GI defects and suture of esophageal stents by means of a novel endoscopic suturing system. These studies were presented as posters at Digestive Disease Week 2015. Manuscript of these works is ongoing, and I am hopeful they will be accepted for publication in the future.

I would like to thank Dr. Binmoeller for giving me this opportunity. In my opinion, there are four important aspects to becoming a good endoscopist: medical knowledge, technical skills, experience i.e., number of procedures, and learning from the best masters. My stay at CPMC gave me the opportunity to grow in all of these areas.

Now, a year later, I can say that we are developing this area at the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona. We have successfully performed several cases of EUS drainage of pancreatic fluid collections and some cases of EUS-guided biliary drainage. Furthermore, I made a speech at the Spanish Association of Gastroenterology about interventional EUS.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank the ACG for the opportunity to have this amazing experience at CPMC. The experience allowed me to grow as a physician and as a person.