International Bone Research Association (IBRA)

IBRA Program B Scholarship Report

(1st to 26th of August 2022)

Host Hospital: Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Universitätsklinikum Gießen-Marburg, Standort Marburg.

Head: Prof. Dr. Dr. Andreas Neff

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My professional expectations of the scholarship was being able to see new procedures that aren't part of my service routine, especially because, in Brazil, in order to become an Oral Maxillofacial Surgeon (OMFS), you have to first do the whole dentistry graduation so then you specialize afterward, differently than Germany, where double formation is required. Being so, in Brazil, the OMFS work separately to the head and neck surgeons and being in Germany, I would be able to experience both specialties at once. My personal expectation was aligned with my professional and I would add only the networking construction as well as taking part on a whole new service, with new infrastructure, techniques, staff organization and etc.

The MKG department at the UKGM is located inside the cancer hospital wing and therefore has a big focus at the oncological treatment as well as the reconstructions. Despite having their main focus on pathology, the team still does all types of surgeries: trauma, orthognathic, TMJ and minor oral surgery. There is one chief, Prof. Dr. Dr. Neff, and three other main surgeons and they all have its own expertise, although they work at multiple areas. It is interesting to point that Prof. Dr. Dr. Neff is one of the most renowned trauma surgeons in Germany.

During my scholarship I was free to choose where I would like to be: at the surgical center, which included a daily schedule with three to four main procedures; at the ambulatory, where they do the follow ups and new patients evaluation; or at the minor oral surgeries surgical centers, where they perform all sorts of oral procedures. Every day I participated on the morning meeting, to discuss the cases planning and patients attended and afterwards, I stayed at the surgical center but in between surgeries, I used the time to follow up the ambulatory. The whole team was very willing to incorporate me at the training center's activities, showing me around, discussing the cases and responding to any questions I may have.

When it comes to new techniques, I was very privileged to see three high condylar fractures reduces using the retro auricular approach, a very specific technique mastered by few surgeons. Prof. Dr. Dr. Neff very kindly walked through every step of the surgery all three times as it was an approach I have never seen before. The same was with the three microvascularized radial graft and the fibular microvascularized graft, used in immediate and post operative reconstruction of oncological patients. As I said, we do not treat cancer patients in Brazil as a OMFS and it was a unique opportunity to see such methods. The hospital is very modern and well equipped, and I got to see some equipment we do not have access to in practice such as surgical microscope or the use of a 90-degree angled driller.

Despite the differences, it was also very interesting to see the procedures that are performed in both centers similarly such as orthognathic and traumas. One example of an already adopted practice after my fellowship at the training center I am currently at is, at some cases, performing the transconjunctival approach for some zygomatic or orbital floor fractures instead of the subciliary approach. It was very enriching to see new procedures but it was even more interesting to see the similar ones and notice small differences and tips that can be used on our daily routine.

At a personal level, my experience was great as I was well received by the group, especially two of the team members that included me and the other fellow on their free time activities and taking their time to explain their routine, steps to become and OMFS in Germany, interests and personal opinions at diverse subjects. I had the chance to learn more about the Germany culture, not only at the OMFS area, and to get to know the city well and its surroundings.

For the future scholars coming to Marburg, I would recommend finding a housing close at the city center. The UKGM hospital is at the outskirts of the city but easily reachable with public transportation especially from the city center and you will have everything you need on a walking distance. Marburg is a very historical and beautiful city and being at the city center allowed me to everyday, after the hospital activities were done, exploring a new corner of the city. Both the learning and touristing can be easily done if well located and a bit of effort.

At last, I would like to thank (a lot) the whole team of the UKGM Marburg for having me for the month, always willing to teach me and having me as part of their daily routine. It was a unique, wonderful experience with lots of learning and great friendships as well. I would like to especially thank Prof. Dr. Dr. Andreas Neff for the reception and kindness, the whole experience wouldn't be possible without you. I will forever be grateful to IBRA for the opportunity of the scholarship that has inspired me in so many aspects and was essential on my building up to become a fine surgeon and I recommend to whoever has the chance to apply for a IBRA program to do so, you won't regret.