

## ISD mentorship program at University hospital, Bern

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” – Benjamin Franklin



International society of dermatology (ISD) mentorship has been an incredible career opportunity for me. I started my ISD mentorship at University Hospital of Bern, Switzerland from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 under Prof. Luca Borradori for a duration of two months. The purpose of ISD mentorship has been to promote advancement and exchange of scientific and clinical dermatological information. In addition, it also provides networking opportunities and cultural exchange. For me, 2 months as ISD mentee has been an academic feast. I had been incredibly excited to be a part of this mentorship program and to work under eminent Prof Borradori; and my experience in Switzerland exceeded my expectations from this program.

On arrival at Bern, I was given a warm welcome and experienced first hand the renowned Swiss hospitality. I was provided with accommodation and office space at the University and with the help of my mentor, I resettled in a short period of time. I attended the outpatient clinics at the University Hospital, Bern and was able to learn their approach in diagnosis, investigations and treatment. I was also given opportunity to individually assess patients and have learnt a great deal from the open discussions that we had on patient care. I was impressed by the work culture, organized structure and functioning of the department and would like to carry this back to my practice in India. I have also been impressed by the primary care infrastructure that I have observed.

The clinics on autoimmune disorders and blistering disorder were the ones I found most interesting. Blistering disorders have been my area of interest. And, I have had a steep learning curve in this area under the guidance of Prof. Borradori. I had the privilege of learning and interacting with the forerunners in the field of blistering disorders and meeting Prof. Pascal Joly was one of the highlights of my stay at Bern. Skin cancers especially melanoma is not very common in India and hence had little exposure. I learnt the technique of video dermatoscopy and its usage during my stay here. I had good exposure in photodynamic therapy. I observed several Mohs micrographic surgeries and other reconstructive surgeries. Though, my mentorship was under Prof. Borradori, I could interact with other consultants in the department. I had the privilege of sitting on clinics and learning from Prof Eckart Haneke on nail diseases. His innovative techniques of digital nerve blocks and approaches to nail surgery were equally educational. I learnt a lot from my interactions with Prof Nikhil Yawalkar who specializes on psoriasis and biologics and on drug rash. I was fascinated by the spectrum and outcome of biologic use in psoriasis. Prof. Christoph Schlapbach work and molecular laboratory on skin immunology, specifically interleukin-9 was inspiring and I had meaningful exchange of thoughts.

During my stay at Bern, I was able to share my experiences of working as dermatologist in India. I had two presentations on tropical dermatology and I shared my experience of working with infectious diseases. I was also given the opportunity to participate in a research on drug reactions and intraepidermal blistering diseases. I carry back several research ideas.

I also had this wonderful opportunity of visiting the beautiful city of Lucerne to participate in the Swiss Derma Day. This was facilitated the University of Bern and I had a lovely experience and good networking opportunities. The annual departmental dinner was held during my stay and it was a memorable socializing event.

ISD mentorship was a wonderful experience of academic and cultural exchange for me. I carry with myself fond memories of all I experienced in Switzerland and I hope I would be able to enhance the quality of my practice by all that I have learnt here. I am grateful to ISD for providing me this opportunity and to Prof Borradori for accepting me as a mentee.

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Berne, 2017.03.01