



Report

Advancing careers

Translational Research Unit (TRU) visits



TRU visit Karolinska

21–24 February 2006
Cancer Centre Karolinska
Stockholm, Sweden

Topic: Tumor immunology and immunotherapy

Seven Fellows representing five countries (Finland, Italy, India, Slovakia and Greece) and seven different institutes participated in the Translational Research Unit (TRU) visit to the Cancer Centre Karolinska (CCK), Sweden.

Eleni M. Karapanagiotou from Greece recognized that “As a result of the TRU visit, ESMO and the CCK granted me the opportunity to obtain a deeper understanding of the theoretical basis underlying the development of a cancer vaccine along with the advantages and drawbacks associated with such new, targeted therapies. I was further able to witness laboratory procedures involved in vaccine production, learn more about the action mechanisms implicated in antibody therapy for solid, as well as hematological malignancies, and gain better insight on the difficulties and possible biases of conducting clinical vaccino-therapy trials. Basically, this course had the advantage of not only offering the latest theoretical considerations on cancer immunology but also a thorough and immensely informative laboratory demonstration. The organizers truly succeeded in what I believe to be their principal aim for this course of both demonstrating the real benefits of basic research to young oncologists and revealing some of the practical difficulties involved in producing a well-designed vaccine.”

Ritwik Pandey, India said “I plan to hold a lecture on tumor immunology and immunotherapy at my home institute and convince the authorities to start the development of a dedicated tumor immunology lab, which will be one of the first in the country. We can start with the malignancies common to our region like carcinoma of cervix and head and neck cancers.”

Federica Merlin, Italy added “I return to my department with new ideas, which I will present to my colleagues in our weekly conference. I’m interested in creating new awareness in immunotherapy here in Verona. This is a therapeutic approach that needs attentive protocol design, knowledge of risks, good laboratory support and a highly expensive technology. I believe that immunotherapy will be more prevalent in medical oncology in the future. I have experienced theoretical and background information and discussion about translational research that has an immediate impact on my future projects and the clinical trials at our institution. Now I’m working on gynecological cancer, especially ovarian cancer, and I hope that with new immunotherapy there will be a possibility to cure these tumors.”

Maria Reckova of Slovakia shared “I would like to thank ESMO for giving me the opportunity to attend the TRU visit at Cancer Centre Karolinska. It was an invaluable experience for me and I will continue my clinical work and research incorporating what I learned at CCK. Oncology is a very exciting and fast growing field and the importance of ongoing collaboration among different institutions and exchanging experiences is crucial. The foundation for such collaboration was set up during TRU visit at CCK not only with experts from CCK but also between the TRU visit participants themselves.”