

Report of ESO Dept-to-Dept Visit Programme

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Host Institution: Inselspital, Freiburgstrasse 8, 3010 Bern, Switzerland

Thanks to the support of the ESO, in the Spring of this year I was able to spend a week visiting the the Neurointerventional Service of the Inselspital in Bern, Switzerland to observe their stroke-team at work. Under the leadership of Prof. Jan Gralla, the team at Bern have a well-established stroke team which has been providing endovascular stroke therapy to the region for many years. In addition they have strong support from the diagnostic neuroradiology team, who provided 24/7 coverage for stroke cases. The department has extensive experience in using advanced MRI techniques in patient selection for endovascular stroke therapy, and has played a major part in several important thrombectomy trials over the past decade. In addition they have a long tradition in education in the field, with their Winter Stroke School – which is run in conjunction with the ESO – having just completed it's fourth successful year.

I was most impressed with the team approach at play in the department. I was interested to see with the multi-faceted way in which the care of the stroke patient began in the pre-hospital setting, with pre-notification of the stroke team in Inselspital so that every member of the team was prepared in advance.

Every patient is discussed in a multi-disciplinary fashion with a very hands-on approach taken by the neurointerventionalists, who reviewed every patient in the MRI suite with the stroke team. A rapid decision "Go/No Go" was then made regarding thrombectomy. I was also interested in the fairly standardised approach taken to the technical steps of each thrombectomy case, which allows for familiarity and speed among all members of the team. It was clear that this was built up from experience during hundreds of cases. Finally, I took note of the very clinical, 'hands-on' approach of the neuroIR team, who followed up each patient, learning what they could from each case.

It is a very busy unit, with an international reputation, which was clear from the international observers that were present during my time there. Perhaps most importantly, I learned a lot regarding the various logistical aspects of running a stroke programme. (It was interesting to see that like most Neurointerventional teams, the unit in Bern also must deal with the rapid increase in thrombectomy cases that are being considered in light of the recent trials).

I must give particular thanks to Prof. Gralla and his team for their hospitality in hosting me during my visit. Every member of the team was professional and enthusiastic, and their dedication to providing an excellent service for their patients shone through.