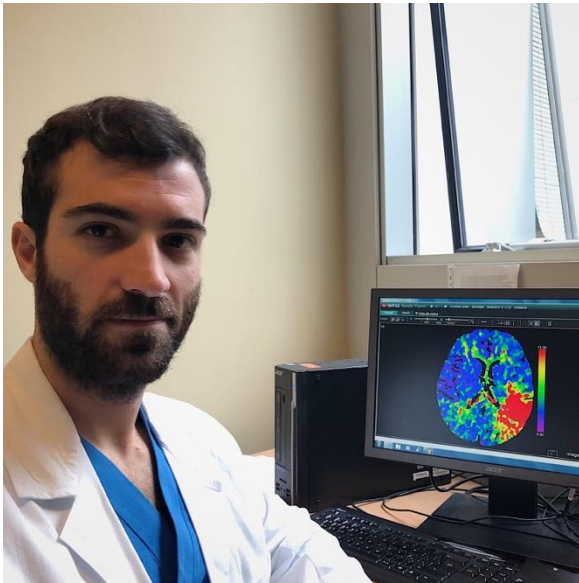


ESO Department to Department Visit Programme 2019

Host Institution: Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin - Campus Benjamin Franklin (CBF)

2-6 September 2019

First of all, I am sincerely grateful to ESO to have accepted my application, to Prof. Audebert and Dr. Rocco for having me at the Charité, one of the most important Neurovascular Unit in Europe.



The Charité Universitätsmedizin is the university hospital affiliated with the two main universities in Berlin, Humboldt and Free University; founded in 1710, currently it consists of four different campuses. I visited the Campus Benjamin Franklin in Steglitz, built in 1968 with the American support, when, after the wall construction, Berlin West needed a new hospital.

The “Klinik für Neurologie” at the CBF is headed by Prof. Heinrich Audebert and, as his chief, is highly focused in the care of acute stroke. During my week my welcoming tutor was Dr. Andrea Rocco, an Italian neurologist who

moved in Germany several years ago and currently leads the Stroke Unit at the CBF with Prof. Christian Nolte. He gave me the opportunity to visit the Stroke Unit and all the affiliated departments and services in order to best understand the acute management of stroke from the admission to the discharge.

The Stroke Unit consists of 12 monitored beds where the patients usually stay no more than 48-72h (24h for TIAs), unless clinical complications. Then, they have been moved to the “subacute” part of the Unit, with about other 12 beds, where they usually wait to complete other examinations or to be transferred in rehab or discharged. Moreover there is a Rehabilitation Unit in the CBF, quite focused on stroke, which usually admits patients from the Stroke Unit also after 48-72h from the admission, if the clinical status allows it. That impressed me, the importance to start as soon as possible an intense rehab, without wasting time; I think we sometimes forget that, as well as the acute treatment, a good part in the stroke recovery is made by an early rehabilitation.

During my week at the CBF I rounded with the stroke team during the Morning Meeting where all patients were discussed and then visited. I had also the opportunity to round with Prof. Audebert, getting useful information from the discussion of clinical cases by a very skilled strokologist. Every day in the morning there was also a Neuroradiology Meeting during which every brain imaging done the day before was discussed with the help of a neuroradiologist in relation to the clinical features presented by a neurologist. That should be the routine practice in every Neurovascular Unit!

During my visit I also attended the Lab Ultrasound that is located within the Stroke Unit, where Carotid Ultrasound and Transcranial Doppler are performed to every patient. I think, as strokologist, it is important not to underestimate the information provided by ultrasounds about the flows status in the brain vessels. But what really impressed me was the presence of a MRI in the Stroke Unit. It works during the day, mostly used for research purpose, but also in acute stroke patients when available. Dr. Rocco told me that they usually prefer MRI to CT scan in the late window stroke (after 6 hours), in the wake-up stroke or in selected cases. Having a MRI just for stroke patients is a great opportunity, providing more detailed information and offering the best treatment option.

So my one-week visit at the Charitè was a stimulating and teaching experience, I had the opportunity to see how an expert stroke center works, identifying which are the strong elements that really improve the acute management of stroke through a focused-patient approach based on current scientific evidence.

Moreover, sharing my doubts and opinions with very skilled colleagues represented a chance to think about my weak points and an incentive to do better in my daily clinical practice.

I am grateful to Dr Rocco, to Prof Audebert and to the residents from Charitè for their welcome and to the ESO for this amazing opportunity offered to us, young aspirants strokologists.

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