

European Stroke Organisation department to department visit

14.-25. November 2022 at University College London and National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery (NHNN), University College London Hospitals

Awardee: Dr. med. Martina Goeldlin, Department of Neurology, Inselspital Bern University Hospital, Bern, Switzerland

Host: Prof. David Werring, University College London Stroke Research Centre, London, UK

In November 2022, I had the unique opportunity to visit the University College London (UCL) Stroke Research Centre and the Stroke Service at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery (NHNN) in London under the supervision of Prof. David Werring.

During the first week, I visited Prof. David Werring's research group. The UCL Stroke Research Centre consists of highly motivated PhD students, visiting researchers, study nurses and research coordinators who all work under the lead of Prof. Werring. The research fellows gave me a warm welcome and I was invited to participate at their monthly research group meeting. I furthermore met former PhD fellows from Prof. Werring's lab. It was a pleasure to interact and discuss with so many people who are dedicated towards improving quality of life and care for patients with cerebrovascular diseases. I will remember their extraordinary team spirit as well as the friendly and supporting atmosphere at the Stroke Research Centre.



Image 1: Stroke Research Group meeting

The UCL stroke research group is the leading centre for multiple national and international studies and consortia and participates in numerous clinical trials and cohort studies. During my visit, I participated in international steering committee meetings and initiation visits with stroke researchers from all around the world. The study nurses, who screen and include patients, are in close contact with the clinical colleagues at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery (NHNN). It was impressive to see that study procedures run very smoothly in parallel to the clinical pathways.

Thanks to a previously established collaboration between our Intracerebral Haemorrhage Research Group and the UCL Stroke Research Centre, despite the very limited time I spent in London, I had the possibility to gather data for one of our joint research projects.



Image 2: The UCL Stroke Research Centre at Russell Square

In the second week, I joined Prof. Werring on call at the NHNN Stroke Service. Every morning, we started at the Emergency Stroke Unit, which is the first point of contact for patients with suspected cerebrovascular events, who are brought in by the emergency medical services. We reviewed patients who were admitted during the night and decided, what additional investigations had to be scheduled. Afterwards, we evaluated patients on the wards, including the neurological intensive care unit. An interprofessional team consisting of doctors, nurses, therapists, and clinical neuroscientists discusses every patient twice a day and agrees on the next steps on their care path. The process is very well organized and everyone is aware of their tasks.



Image 3: The Hyperacute Stroke Unit team

In addition, I joined two consultant neurologists, Dr. Rupert Oliver in the outpatient intracerebral haemorrhage clinic, and Dr. Arvind Chandratheva in the outpatient TIA clinic. Again, I was impressed by the structured work-up, which is performed in outpatients in usually not even a full day. Given that some patients travel for several hours to attend a specialist appointment, this is very important.

Medically challenging situations from the in- and outpatient department are discussed on a regular basis at interdisciplinary conferences. I enjoyed the well-balanced mix of reviewing state-of-the art evidence and finding solutions sometimes beyond the guidelines. In addition, we reviewed particularly educative cases with the senior house officers and registrars for teaching purposes.

Although I only spent two weeks in London, I have had the opportunity to gain insights into a large scope of clinical and research activities. I would like to thank the ESO department-to-department visit programme for their financial support.

Last but not least, this stay would not have been possible without my host, Prof. David Werring, who was dedicated at all time to make my stay as instructive and memorable as possible. I would like to express my gratitude for giving me access to your local and international network, including me in such a variety of activities, providing teaching sessions and finding time for all these inspiring discussions on clinical cases and research questions. Thank you!