

Guidelines IBRA scholarship report

Information about Scholar and fellowship

- Name of Scholar: Alejo E. Garcia Bensí
- Country of Citizenship: Argentina
- Name and Country of Training Center: Centro Medico Teknon, Barcelona Spain
- Name of Fellowship Director: Drs Joaquim Casañas MD, PhD and Pablo Lopez – Osornio MD, PhD
- Scholarship Type: Program B
- Scholarship date (from – until) March 22th 2021 – April 23th 2021

Professional and personal experience

- What were your professional and personal expectations of the scholarship?

My professional expectations were to observe and assist with Upper Extremity surgery and specific techniques especially nerve surgeries and treatment of nerve injuries, as brachial plexus injuries, and in advance arthroscopy surgical techniques.

My personal expectations were to share acknowledgment and to learn about different options of treatment in different disease, also to learn about the city and have an amazing cultural experience in such beautiful city as Barcelona.

- What is the main focus of the IBRA training center (in general and of the department) you assisted in?

The main focus of the IBRA training center was Hand and Upper extremity surgery and Nerve surgery in all the extremity, is a private group of medics that have different professionals to focus in the different zone of the extremity such as shoulder surgeon, nerve surgeon (including lower extremity) lower extremity surgeons. They have at least 5 microscopes available for different surgeries and the latest technology in arthroscopy. They perform the trauma unit group in different hospitals and clinics around Barcelona, and they are around 12 professionals surgeons and the rehabilitation is included in the same group.

- What did you do during your scholarship/how were you incorporated in the training center's daily routines/activities:

I was doing the same work as an advance fellow, assisting in the surgical time. I was able to observe and participate in the most surgeries in a daily basis along with the fellowship directors and able to share different opinions before, during and after the surgery in each case, giving my own knowledge such as some changes in the scaphoid lunate ligament reconstruction that my fellowship director has made. They were always predisposed with me to participate in all surgeries including the nerve surgeries, and to show my different point of view of the same pathology. I was able to be in the medical consultation and to speak between patients with the fellowship directors, they show me how they manage the complete treatment of the patient to have the complete integration in a successfully treatment.

- How many surgeries have you assisted and which concrete technical modifications and methods have you seen?

I participated and assisted in about 20 surgeries a week and saw approximately 50 clinic patient in the consulting room with different fellowship directors, there are many difficult cases of nerve injuries like plexus palsy or peripheral nerve injury. It was interesting because I saw some CPE nerve injury because of the COVID disease and CPE palsy because the patient was in intensive therapy. The directors were making some new studies of this patients, so they believe that exist some neurotoxicity of the COVID virus and not only the bed position also, it can be a injury of the medical medication that the patient receive during the UCI time.

I feel very lucky to see and participate in how this incredible team work.

- Specify your 3 to 5 favorite procedures and/or new skills you could acquire
 - Which procedures can potentially be adopted in your future practice and how do they compare to your experiences at home
- 1) Arthroscopy Partial Trapezectomy: In this pathology there so many different ways of treatment, I learn to do this surgery very quickly with amazing results, I realize how important are the arthroscopy portals of this one and how to explore the joint, and how to do the “wafer” of 4 mm. Finally to end with a suspension with the micro link system . In my practice the most surgeons do this treatment in an open technique and with different way of suspension. So it will be a good way to do the transitioning to the arthroscopic technique.
 - 2) Nerve Transfer: Specially when we have a nerve palsy that the most cases will be a traumatic one, I learn how to measure different nerve potentials and to have another technique instead of making a tendon transfer technique that, the last one, could be the latest option for the patient. Also to recover function of some muscles that have been damage during the injurie, for example, in a radial nerve palsy, to transfer some median nerve branches to the radial nerve terminal branches, to recover the extension of the wrist and the hand, this technique in a young patient has excellent results. Also how to protect the nerve during the surgery.
 - 3) Neuromonitoring in surgery: This technique is the most important one for me, monitoring the nerve with an EMG during the surgery was amazing, you can have the main information of the nerve if is still “alive” and how the nerve will conduct in the future. The use of the microscope is very difficult and it takes a lot of hours to learn how to use it, specially in the nerve injuries like reconstruction, using a nerve graft or nerve transfer. They teach me how to prepare the patient, how to approach, do the ischemia in the upper limb to avoid nerve injuries and work without ischemia and check the nerve with the EMG live during the surgery. It will be a necessary to have an specialized neurologist or a physiatrist to check the measures in the operation room to realize how the nerve is working or not, this is crucial because you can decide if we can do a nerve transfer and how to select this one, to do a nerve graft or a tendon transfer. They used to explore all nerves in the body specially upper limbs
- What was the most significant personal experience of the scholarship for you (e.g. cultural exchange etc.)?

I built a really good relationship with the staff of traumaunit team, they treat me so nice and the always have the predisposition to teach in all the surgeries and in the operation room. I felt welcomed into a amazing family and wanting the best for my experience. They also make a personal lesson for me and teach me nerve injuries and how to treat them, always worried in how I was during my stay in Barcelona and making some plans outside the medical issue. I can't express in words how good the scholarship was, highly recommended for those who speak Spanish.

Closing words

Tips to future scholars

Housing: I was living in the Barceloneta which was and old city of Barcelona, very close to the beach, but everything was near, you can walk around the whole city, also the public transport is excellent, in 30 minutes you can be everywhere in Barcelona. You arrive in the Prats Airport and is very easy to reach the main town. During this COVID situation you can choose between a lot of apartments because there is no much tourism, like hotels are the most closed.

Traveling: It was difficult because during the COVID situation there were so many restrictions to travel around Spain, sometimes you can travel inside Catalunya sometimes only in Barcelona. I could travel to Montseny that Is a natural park and I stay there for 2 days, full touch with nature. Barcelona has mountains, beach, culture, museums, a wonderful story. People is very nice, they can speak Spanish instead of Catalan that for some people is the most difficult stuff. I never get disappointed during the trip.

Acknowledgement (thanking IBRA and the training center)

I don't have words to thank to IBRA for this opportunity I got, In the beginning I got all prepared to do this travel during March 2020, and all the COVID situation ruin it, but the excellent IBRA personal was always in contact with me asking me when I want to do my rotation. I feel very proud to be in contact

with IBRA, always wanting to educate, to have really good experiences, making worldwide connections and colleagues. Thank you so so much, it will be an unforgettable experience. Thanks to Drs Joaquim Casañas and Pau Lopez Osornio to make this possible also, they reserve me the spot in their team, and they recommend me when was the best time to go to Barcelona. I can't thank them enough for how I was welcomed. The whole staff was very nice and incredible people. One again my sincere THANKS to IBRA foundation for make this possible.

