

IBRA Clinical Fellowship Report

Fellow: Dr. Wilhelm Berger

Fellowship Institution: Zentrum für Handchirurgie, Ravensburg, Germany

Fellowship Period: 18.08. – 31.08.2014

Supervisors: Prof. Hermann Krimmer

Fellowship Institution: Lorenz-Böhler Unfallkrankenhaus, Vienna, Austria

Fellowship Period: 01.09. – 14.09.2014

Supervisors: OA. Dr. Martin Leixnering; OA Dr. Christoph Pezzei

As part of my hand surgical training I already experienced Professor Krimmer in recent years at various courses and congresses and I know OA Dr. Martin Leixnering and OA Dr. Christoph Pezzei from the hand-courses which I attended in Vienna.

When I received the opportunity in 2014 to further develop myself in the field of hand surgery and was fortunate to win an IBRA fellowship, it was important for me to visit these two internationally recognized centres.

The practice of Prof. Krimmer at the Ärztehaus is located right next to the St. Elisabeth Hospital in the very idyllic small German town of Ravensburg. Prof. Krimmer and all his staff welcomed me warmly. I could move freely in practice: the practice is a modern, autonomous structure with its investigation cabins and two operating rooms. The major surgeries are carried out in the hospital.

The almost incredible efficiency seemed very impressive to me, the doctors are operating autonomously in the cabins, but they can consult Prof. Krimmer at any time. Also the bureaucratic processes are highly standardized and organized by the secretary's office in an extremely efficient way. The changes in the operating rooms are very fast and therefore a high number of operations per year is reached.

Technically especially the scaphoid fractures and pseudarthrosis, corrective osteotomies in Madelung deformity and after Radius Fractures, and surgical techniques in birth abnormalities of the hand conducted by Professor Krimmer were very interesting for me. I could see all operations except the severely traumatized hand and get a good idea of the approach and implementation of interventions in these pathologies.

My extremely positive impressions were completed by the trainings which were held every Tuesday and the very well-equipped library with all relevant journals for hand surgery, as well as the regularly held audit briefings.

Prof. Krimmer, his family and their employees invited me to activities outside the clinic and enriched my stay even on a personal level: whether Krimmers summer party, the unforgettable Rutenfest or cycling trips in the surroundings of Ravensburg as well as many dinners, talks and tours with the colleagues.

I spent the second part of my fellowship immediately afterwards in Vienna, at the Lorenz Böhler hospital. I already knew the AUVA and the Wiener Handkurse. Again, I was warmly welcomed and introduced by OA. Dr. Martin Leixnering. The Lorenz Böhler Unfallkrankenhaus is an emergency hospital with several hand surgeons working in different teams to ensure that almost 24 hours can be covered.

I've spent most of the time with OA Dr. Martin Leixnering, and OA Dr. Christoph Pezzei: In the office, where I received a very good insight into the various kind of surgeries and I was able to ask my questions at any time, as well as in the operating room, where I was able to witness some innovative interventions.

I found the shock wave treatment, curated by Dr. Josef Jurkowitsch, very interesting, which was performed in the same anesthesia directly after surgical treatment of the scaphoid pseudarthrosis. The PRC over two miniarthrotomys without intervening at the retinaculum and the joint capsule was also very interesting.

Another highlight was the day in the Videolab of the Vienna Hand courses where I could assist at the creation of the videos for the new wrist training course and I was able to spend a great day - on a professional and personal level - with OA Dr. Leixnering and Pezzei, and Primarius Dr. Hintringer.

The SLAM technique was performed at a cadaver hand as well as arthroscopic TFCC repair and the Mini Tight Rope technique.

During my stay at Vienna the "Aufbaukurs" was held at which I was invited and this gave me the opportunity to repeat what I have learned and to participate at the legendary Heurigen Abend.

I have spent another very nice evening with Christoph Pezzei and his wife at the traditional "Buschenverbrennen" at the Heurigen Mallin.

Vienna also offers a large cultural and culinary program which I could enjoy during my stay.