

International Guest Scholarship 2018 of the American College of Surgeons
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Last year, from October 1st until November 2nd, I had the great opportunity to visit four major centers for pancreatic surgery in the United States of America, thanks to the International Guest Scholarship (IGS) provided by the American College of Surgeons (ACS). I also attended to the Annual Meeting of the ACS in Boston.

During the first week, I visited Dr. Michael Kendrick at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. I really appreciated Dr. Kendrick's hospitality and skills to perform laparoscopic pancreatic resections. I was present for two laparoscopic Whipples (one with portal resection and end-to-end reconstruction). I have also seen other interesting laparoscopic surgeries such as a splenectomy, a laparoscopic resection of an arcuate ligament. In my unit, we perform laparoscopic Whipples, and the approach used by Dr. Kendrick gave me a number of tricks to improve my technique and do the procedure more safely. Dr. Kendrick also demonstrated his kindness by inviting me to have dinner with his lovely wife. He also took me to fly over the Mississippi River in his airplane. Rochester is a small city, with not much to do other than being at Mayo Clinic, so I took advantage to study and to get ready for the following four weeks of the IGS.

During the second week, I went to Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, OH. In this visit, I attended the operating room with Dr. Matthew Walsh and colleagues, where I observed one laparoscopic Whipple, one hybrid laparoscopic-robotic Whipple, one right hepatectomy and several laparoscopic cholecystectomies. At Cleveland Clinic, I had the opportunity to see my first robotic Whipple. In my hospital, we have a Da Vinci, however, we do not use it for Whipples. I also attended clinics with Dr. Walsh, where I learnt the differences between clinics in the US and in my country. I also had the opportunity to attend to the morbidity-mortality conference, to interact with the residents (that allowed me to meet young people and to compare between the American and Argentinian resident programs). Cleveland is a nice city, and since I am a fan of music in general, I visited the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

The third week was in New York. There, I visited Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC). I observed surgeries by Drs. William Jarnagin and Michael D'Angelica. The number of surgeries performed in their service is incredible. I was able to see complex pancreas and liver cases. They have a system of cameras in the operating room lights, allowing a visitor to see all the details of the surgeries comfortably seated in a chair without interfering in the surgical field. I also attended liver and pancreas conferences, where they discussed on a case by case basis. I had the privilege to attend to a weekly conference directed by Professor Dr. Leslie Blumgart. In that conference, Dr. Blumgart taught surgical liver anatomy based on videos of surgeries performed by him. New York is an amazing city, I took advantage of my free time to walk around, visit museums and have good food.

During the fourth week, I travelled to Boston to attend the 2018 Clinical Congress of the ACS. In that opportunity, I felt really welcomed by the ACS staff. We went to the Opening Ceremony, the presidential address, participating from the stage. In that situation, I met all the other scholars, with whom we built a friendship that I'm sure will persist over time. The first morning, we were able to introduce ourselves to the International Liaison and Scholarship section staff. I took a complimentary course for

IGSs on Negotiation Skills, which I liked. I think I will take advantage of what I learnt there. We participated in a dinner for all the prior and actual scholars where we have the chance to meet each other (including past scholars) and had a group photo. We also presented, during a session including all my colleagues, our main research topics, where I discussed my experience with the management of bile duct injuries. The ACS Clinical Congress was a great opportunity to meet old friends from all over the world, to make new friends, and to attend different social events (like a nice reception by the University of Colorado in Denver, kind invitation of Dr. Richard Schulick, my mentor).

The fifth week started at the end of the ACS Congress. My last rotation was to attend to the University of Colorado in Denver. Dr. Richard Schulick invited me and two other surgeons, from Japan (Dr. Kenichiro Araki) and from Germany (Dr. Carsten Kamphues). We arrived the hotel on a Friday and the following day, Dr. Schulick personally picked us up and took us to the mountains. We visited his house in Keystone, where we shared personal experiences, background, etc. We went hiking and sightseeing in the area. Dr. Schulick's hospitality and kindness are remarkable. We came back to Denver on Sunday and on Monday started our clinical experience. We met Dr. Marco Del Chiaro, an outstanding Italian surgeon recently moved to Denver. His expertise is borderline resectable pancreatic cancer, from whom I learnt different new concepts on the management of this oncological situation. On the first day, we had the privilege to deliver the grand rounds in front of the whole surgical department. I presented my research on the management of bile duct injuries. It was really a challenge to speak in front of a highly qualified audience. During that week, I attended the Operating Room and I was able to see a laparoscopic and an open Whipple, two robotic liver resections (first time I personally saw this technique) and several other laparoscopic general surgeries. Two nights, we had dinner with part of the staff of the Surgical Department in two different restaurants, personally chosen by Dr. Schulick. On the last day, Dr. Del Chiaro invited me to his house to have an Italian dinner with his family. The day after, I came back to Argentina.

Personally, these were the most intensive learning weeks I had in my professional life. The opportunity to visit four major centers for HPB surgery in the US, is one of the most important things will ever happen to me. I am deeply thankful to the ACS for the scholarship and it will a great pleasure to help the International Liaison and Scholarship Committee in whatever I can be useful to. I will encourage other surgeons in my country to apply for the scholarship. The different techniques I have learnt and the different approaches by different surgeons I have seen, will definitely impact my clinical practice and improve my skills towards a better care for my patients.