Canadian Tour 2012 Academic Exchange Programme

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The Canadian Urological Association (CUA) - European Association of Urology (EAU) Academic Exchange Programme offered the opportunity to four European urologists to visit leading urology institutions in Canada and examine the best practices of these institutions.

We earlier reported on the visits to Halifax and Montreal (EUT issue Aug. 2012) and Toronto and Vancouver (EUT issue Oct. 2012). The tour, which further brought the participants to Calgary, Edmonton and Banff, also allowed both European visitors and their Canadian hosts to exchange insights on the clinical challenges they encounter in everyday clinical practice. The following article provides details of the third part of the tour:

Calgary

The exciting invitation by Drs. Bryce Weber, Stephen Paulier and Walid Farhat to participate in the 9th Annual Course on Basic and Advanced Urology Laparoscopic Skills in Calgary enabled us to get practical skills in dry and wet lab training at the Clinical Skills Building of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

We very much enjoyed this special opportunity of a practical training provided by our Canadian colleagues and supported by highly skilled laparoscopic urologists. The course consisted of three parts. The first included lectures with attractive video presentations of laparoscopic and robotic procedures, while in the second part we had the chance to exercise our skills using training boxes and simulators in a dry lab (Photo 1). But the most important and even more exciting part of the course consisted of the hands-on training in the wet lab (Photos 2-4). We performed laparoscopic partial nephrectomy, pyeloplasty and nephrectomy using the latest devices, instruments and haemostatic materials under the enthusiastic guidance of the instructors (Photos 2-4).

Moreover, the course demonstrated the efforts of Canadian urologists to further advance their already high-level of competence. Despite a tight programme we enjoyed a short tour of Calgary’s downtown area, where we saw iconic places and districts that reminded us that the city hosted the 1988 Olympic Winter Games (Photo 5).

Edmonton

Arriving in Edmonton on a sunny Sunday afternoon, we all felt that we would need some physical exercise in order to prepare for another full clinical and scientific programme scheduled the following day. A bicycle ride along the beautiful North Saskatchewan River was certainly the right activity since it gave us the first impressions of Edmonton.

Dr. Niels Jacobson welcomed us at the University of Alberta Hospital and guided us right into the operating room where we watched him perform a robotic assisted radical prostatectomy, a procedure he has become very familiar with. Following the surgery, we had a meeting with Dr. Peter Metcalfe, a paediatric urologist and third-generation member of a very prominent family of urologists who played a key role in developing the department (Photo 6). We also learned from Metcalfe that paediatric urology is further boosting its research activities despite the clinical challenges they face.

We very much appreciated the opportunity to observe a case of laparoscopic radical nephrectomy, Department of Urology, The University of Alberta (Photo 8). The next day’s case presentations and tour of the outpatient facilities were followed by observing an open radical cystectomy and subsequent urinary diversion with ileal conduit. Later that day, we also observed a case of laparoscopic radical nephrectomy (Photo 8) and had the chance to visit the operating rooms and the clinics at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital (Photo 9).

Banff

The full and insightful programme carefully prepared by our Edmonton hosts gave us a true and realistic insight into the comprehensive scope of their activities. They made our stay in Edmonton not only highly informative but also socially fulfilling. An invitation by Prof. Gerald Todd, department chairman, to the Faculty Club of the University of Alberta was another highlight of the visit, and showed the hospitality of our hosts. We left Edmonton with fond memories, thankful for the friendliness we have experienced.

In Banff, our last destination, we attended the 67th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Urological Association. Prof. Gerald Todd, our senior mentor, spoke during this year’s annual conference of the Canadian Urological Society at Banff Springs Conference Center (Photo 10). Dr. Canda participated at the Pediatric Urologists of Canada (PUC) that was held during the annual CUA conference. He presented a research project where he noted how the collaboration between Canadian and European urologists could be further intensified through multi-institutional studies (Photo 10).

At CUA’s Annual Banquet, we did not only express our sincere gratitude to our hosts but also took the opportunity to present to our hosts, and on behalf of the CUA, commemorative plaque to mark this exceptional exchange programme. We also received from CUA president Prof. Cheetham glass sculptures engraved with the dates of our visit (Photo 12). During the banquet Prof. Yves Fradet from Montreal received the prestigious Award of The Canadian Urological Association, with Prof. Lawrence Kozits giving an impressive and very elegant introduction of Prof. Fradet and his career.

The Banff meeting also gave us many opportunities to again meet our Canadian urological colleagues who hosted us during our visits at the Academic Urological Institutions and Departments in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary. Our thanks to all contributors from the CUA and the EAU for giving us this excellent opportunity. And to Dr. Keith Rourke of the Division of Urology, University of Alberta who took us to Lake Louise, one of Banff’s beautiful locations (Photo 13).

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