



American Tour 2023 Academic Exchange Programme

A transformative journey for urologists: observing at institutions, experiencing a new culture, and forging connections



Dr. Iulia Andras
Iuliu Hatieganu
University of Medicine
and Pharmacy,
Municipal Hospital
Cluj-Napoca (RO)

dr.iuliaandras@
gmail.com



**Dr. Karl-Friedrich
Kowalewski**
University Medical
Centre Mannheim
(DE)

karl.kowalewski@
gmail.com



Dr. Giancarlo Marra
University Hospital
S.G. Battista –
Molinette
Turin (IT)

drgiancarlomarra@
gmail.com

The European Association of Urology (EAU) - American Urological Annual (AUA) Exchange programme offers urologists an invaluable opportunity to broaden their horizons and gain insights into different medical practices around the world. In this report, we share our experiences as a group of three urologists who travelled to three prestigious American institutions: Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tennessee; Duke University in Durham, North Carolina; and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Our journey began with the AUA Annual Meeting 2023 (AUA 2023) in Chicago, and from there, we embarked on an enriching educational adventure.

At the AUA 2023

The EAU-AUA Exchange experience began with our attendance at the AUA 2023. This prestigious event provided us with a comprehensive overview of the latest advancements and research in the field of urology. Attending lectures, participating in panel discussions, and networking with renowned urologists from around the world enriched our knowledge and broadened our perspectives.

“Throughout our journey, we were impressed by the professionalism and friendliness displayed by the staff at all three institutions.”

Vanderbilt University (1 - 5 May)

Our visit to Vanderbilt University's urology department commenced with a warm welcome



We received a warm welcome from Dr. Kristen Scarpato

from the staff. Dr. Kristen Scarpato and Dr. Dave Penson put tremendous effort to organise a very rich programme for our visit. During our time there, we had the privilege of observing surgeries performed by both the skilled staff and the residents.

The mornings were dedicated to shadowing in the operating theatres, where we witnessed cutting-edge procedures and techniques. We attended perfectly performed surgeries such as robotic-assisted radical prostatectomy with posterior approach (Dr. Dan Barocas), robotic-assisted radical

cystectomy (Dr. Sam Chang), and radical nephrectomy with inferior vena cava (IVC) thrombectomy (Dr. Amy Luckenbaugh). It was great to explore different types of approaches and to learn from such experienced surgeons. The staff was not only highly professional but also eager to share their knowledge and expertise. Also, we were impressed by the skills and independence of residents and fellows who trained in the urology department.

In addition to the educational experience, we had the opportunity to explore the vibrant city of Nashville. We visited the iconic Ryman

Auditorium, immersing ourselves in the rich history of country music. Another great and fun experience was cowboy boot shopping, which made us feel connected to the local atmosphere. Moreover, we indulged in an authentic Southern barbecue and savoured the culinary delights. The evenings spent at a baseball stadium with the college teams or dinner with the attendings provided a valuable platform for discussion and networking.

“The dedication of the attending physicians and the enthusiasm of the residents were truly inspiring.”

Duke University (6 - 10 May)

At Duke University's urology department, we were welcomed by Dr. Moul and his wife, who took us on the tour of downtown Durham and then graciously accompanied us to the renowned Broadway show, Moulin Rouge.



Exploring Nashville with Dr. Sam Chang



Sharing our research projects during Grand Rounds with Dr. Judd Moul

The mornings were dedicated to observing surgeries such as robotic-assisted partial nephrectomies performed by very skilled surgeons Dr. Ankeet Shah and Dr. Michael Abern, where we gained valuable insights from both the faculty and the residents. The exchange of ideas during these sessions fostered a dynamic learning environment.

One highlight of our stay at Duke was attending a journal club with the staff. Engaging in lively discussions on recent research publications deepened our understanding of current trends in urology. Our interactions with the staff members were highly rewarding, as they generously shared their experiences and expertise.

Apart from the scientific activities, we enjoyed a rich social programme, getting to know the staff also in an informal context. Axe throwing contest was a great way to meet some of the residents and staff of the urology department. Moreover, we were impressed by the tour of Duke University campus, where we visited the famous basketball court and basketball Hall of Fame.

Georgetown University (10 - 13 May)

Our final destination was Georgetown University's urology department in the heart of Washington D.C. The Chair, Dr. Keith Kowalczyk, welcomed us to Georgetown Medstar University Hospital. We were greeted by the friendly and knowledgeable staff, who made us feel at home.



At the Duke University campus

Similar to our previous experiences, mornings were spent observing surgeries, where we witnessed the utilisation of advanced techniques and state-of-the-art equipment but we also had the opportunity of enjoying some free time and visiting Washington D.C. Furthermore, we were impressed by the teaching system for fellows, who showed brilliant surgical skills.

As our visit coincided with the baseball season, we had the opportunity to attend an exhilarating game, further bonding with the staff and creating lasting memories. These informal outings provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen professional

relationships and exchange perspectives beyond the confines of the hospital.

General observations

Throughout our journey, we were impressed by the professionalism and friendliness displayed by the staff at all three institutions. The dedication of the attending physicians and the enthusiasm of the residents were truly inspiring. The strong emphasis on educational experiences was evident, as they willingly shared their knowledge and expertise with us.

Conclusion

The EAU-AUA Exchange programme experience was a transformative journey for us as urologists; from observing surgeries and participating in journal clubs to experiencing the cultural environment. We strongly believe that the connections and friendships established during this visit will be of tremendous importance for the collaboration between the European and the American associations in urology. We would like to thank everyone involved in organising this exchange programme. We would be more than happy to return the favour and host the American urologists at our institution!

“The strong emphasis on educational experiences was evident”



Enjoying a Mexican dinner in Georgetown with Dr. Keith Kowalczyk and his colleagues