

Programme improves knowledge and skills with an eye for culture



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urological tasks do not only include the administration of chemotherapy/immunotherapy and management of patients who received a transplant, but also the delivery of a brachytherapy and sometimes even performing spinal anaesthesia when the anaesthesiologists are not available. Thereafter I had the opportunity to see the research activities of the department and to meet medical students to discuss about differences in work and life between Europe and Japan.

A real exchange is not only about urology: I also enjoyed a guided tour in a sake factory in an old Japanese mansion. The visit ended with dinner in a traditional Japanese restaurant with the entire team. This was another great example of the warm hospitality of our Japanese friends.

Visit to Tokyo (10 - 14 April)

A bullet train (Shinkansen) took me from Niigata to Tokyo for the next part of my visit. Véronique was unfortunately blocked in Doha (Qatar) for 24 hours and missed the connecting flight. At 16.00 Dr. Soichiro Yoshida picked me up at the hotel and brought me to meet Prof. Yasuhisa Fujii (Tokyo Medical and Dental University Graduate School (JP)) in his office where I received a warm welcome and an illustrated book explaining the gasless 3D laparoscopy, the 'speciality of the



The authors at the JUA welcome dinner

house'. Then we went to the operating room to observe a gasless laparoscopic partial cystectomy, part of their famous tetramodality approach for bladder cancer. The procedure was worth seeing thanks to the use of the 3D glasses, a futuristic and very useful instrument.

The day ended with an informal dinner in a traditional restaurant with various chicken specialties and a visit of the local shrine with Prof. Fujii and part of his team. The day after Véronique finally arrived. We started early in the morning by participating in the oncurological meeting with brilliant case presentations and active discussions. Thereafter, we attended a partial nephrectomy performed with the gasless technique.

Ongoing research projects

The most important ongoing research projects by Prof. Fujii's team were then presented with a highlight on several important articles published by our hosts. The local team is very active with about 10 presentations per year at EAU meetings



We observed a gasless 3D partial nephrectomy through 3D glasses

and several best poster prizes. We were asked in return to present some work of our own. Marco presented the risk of harbouring secondary bladder cancer tumour after the treatment of primary prostate cancer and Véronique the artificial urinary sphincter robot-assisted approach. Over dinner we could exchange views on work and life in Japan and Europe with the entire team.

During the weekend, we could enjoy the sakura (cheery flower blossom) and a training of Rikishis (sumo fighters).

Visit to Nagoya (14 - 20 April)

A bullet train took us to Nagoya, to the Marriot hotel, located at the top of the train station, with a bar on the 52th floor and a fantastic view over the city. Nagoya is the third largest Japanese city and is famous for the Toyota car factory. Dr. Naohiko



We received a warm welcome in Tokyo from Prof. Fujii

Fukami picked us up at the hotel and drove us to Prof. Sasaki, one of the two female professors of urology in Japan at the Fujita Health University School of Medicine. She introduced us to Prof. Ryoichi Shiroki, chief of the department. Then we attended a RARP perfectly performed by Prof. Makoto Sumitomo, followed by a hospital tour with Dr. Kiyoshi Takahara (Fujita Health University School of Medicine (JP)).

The day after, Prof. Mamoru Kusaka picked us up at the hotel and showed us the 3D printing technique for kidney tumours and transplants. We had the opportunity to meet the president of the university, Prof. Kiyotaka Hoshinaga, the former chief of the urological department and currently in charge of the management of the entire university of Nagoya. Subsequently, we attended a robot-assisted retroperitoneal partial nephrectomy. At the end of the day we were invited to give a lecture to the team: Marco discussed the impact of bladder cancer on patients affected by other previous cancer diagnoses and Véronique robot-assisted supratrigonal cystectomy with augmentation cystoplasty. All this was accompanied by an excellent bento (lunch) box.



Some 3D printing models

The final day

During the final day at the hospital, we observed 2 robot-assisted radical prostatectomies performed by Dr. Kusaka and Dr. Takahara. In the evening, we attended dinner organised by Prof. Tomohiko Ichikawa, president of the 107th JUA Annual Meeting meeting. Véronique wore a beautiful kimono, a fundamental part of the cultural exchange.

"We started early in the morning by participating in the oncurological meeting with brilliant case presentations and active discussions."

We could attend the JUA annual meeting with many lectures from overseas during international sessions. We had the opportunity to meet Prof. Masato Fujisawa (JUA President), all our hosts and Prof. Antonio Alcaraz (University Hospital Clinic Barcelona (ES)) and Prof. Christian Gratzke (Uniklinik Freiburg (DE)). In the ceremony we received our certificates. The JUA meeting was amazing, since it brought together 8,000 urologists. We were invited to give lectures during the congress. Marco did a presentation on the role of surgery in non-localised bladder cancer and Véronique on continent urinary diversion.

In conclusion, this experience gave us the opportunity not only to visit a foreign country and active departments of urology in Japan but also to make new friend among Japanese colleagues.

We thank everyone involved in the organisation of this event and especially the EAU for giving us this marvellous opportunity. We hope to see our friends again and to continue a fruitful collaboration with them.



The famous sakura blossom



Meeting with Prof. Fujisawa, JUA President (front row, middle), our Japanese hosts and Profs. Gratzke and Alcaraz.