# ESVS Travel Grant Report – Ospedale San Raffaele, Milan, Italy

My name is Nikolaos Konstantinou, and I am a resident for vascular surgery currently in my 6th and last year at the LMU university hospital in Munich, Germany. Since the beginning of my training, I have been working in two vascular centers in Germany specializing in the treatment of complex aortic pathologies and find this area of vascular surgery particularly interesting. Being an active member of the ESVS over the past few years, I came across the announcement of the travel grants and soon applied for one. Following the suggestion of my clinic director, Prof. N. Tsilimparis, I chose the vascular surgery department of the San Raffaele hospital in Milan, Italy as my destination.

The San Raffaele clinic, led by Prof. Chiesa and Prof. Melissano alongside him, is well known in the worldwide vascular surgery circles for its huge expertise in the treatment of complex aortic pathologies and especially for the open surgical treatment of thoraco-abdominal aortic aneurysms and dissections. Being a resident in a primarily endovascular center in Germany this was a great opportunity for me to get acquainted and obtain a better and deeper understanding of the intricacies of the open surgical management of aortic pathologies.

Both Prof. Chiesa and Prof. Melissano were happy to accommodate my visit to their clinic, which took place in March of 2022. From the first moment I felt most welcome by the physician and nursing staff and tried to absorb as much information as possible, regarding not only the surgical procedures themselves, but also patient work-up, surgery prepping and postoperative management. The chances to do this were many, as with it being a high-volume aortic center, I was able to be present in aortic surgeries daily; the types of procedures I was able to participate in were also varied, ranging from infrarenal AAA, to pararenal and thoraco-abdominal aortic aneurysms. The learning experience of watching these procedures up-close was also significantly enhanced by the willingness of each operating physician to explain what they were doing and give some insight into each step of the way.

The open surgical treatment of thoraco-abdominal aortic pathologies, however, stood out as particularly interesting and exciting. The immense experience and expertise of Professors Chiesa, Melissano and Bertoglio with this challenging pathology became apparent right from the beginning when inspecting the operating theater setup and how well all the staff were incorporated in the procedure, including the anesthesiologists and the perfusionists. I was shown the optimal way of dissecting each aortic segment and the reno-visceral arteries along with tips and tricks as well as pitfalls that one might come across.

All in all, this was a great opportunity to expand my knowledge in key areas of our field and to also get to know some of the most renowned vascular surgeons worldwide. It was also a great opportunity to explore the lovely city of Milan and its culinary offerings, as well as the beautiful surrounding areas. Also, despite the COVID-19 pandemic being a significant hurdle before and during

my trip, leading to travel limitations and shortening my initially planned visit to the San Raffaele clinic, this was an unforgettable experience that I can only recommend to any colleagues interested.

A special thank-you is in order to ESVS for making all this possible, especially considering how uncomplicated und unbureaucratic the application procedure was. I would also like to thank Professors Chiesa, Melissano and Bertoglio for accommodating my visit to their department, as well as the director of my home clinic, Prof. Tsilimparis for providing me with this opportunity. For any questions regarding my visit to the San Raffaele Clinic in Milan, Italy do not hesitate to contact me at: ni.konstantinou@outlook.com.

Kind regards,

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