

TRAVEL-TO-A-MENTOR-AWARD EXPERIENCE

Raisa C. Lomanto S. Silva

In October 2017, I started making contact with one of the greatest pediatric hematologists and researchers worldwide, and whom I also found out to be one of the kindest person I have ever met, Dr. Eric Grabowski. Since then, we have been in touch and he accepted me as his Research Fellow for a year or two.

My travel-to-a-mentor-award experience took place in two different cities and scenarios, which made it even richer. At first, I went to Boston to spend a week with Dr. Grabowski, and right after I travelled to San Diego to attend the Thrombosis & Hemostasis Societies of North America bianual Summit. My Boston experience started on February 26th. I met with Dr. Grabowski at the Massachusets General Hospital. In this first day, he very kindly made a tour of the Hospital with me. That's when I got to know that the hospital was founded in 1811, and still beautifully maintains a great part of its original structure.

On the second day I attended first Pediatric Grand Rounds in the morning, and then went to Dr. Grabowski's hematology clinic, which was an amazing learning experience for me. I saw hemophilia patients, children with bleeding and thrombotic disorders, genetic counselling and a lot of interesting discussions on hematology subjects. Due to my personal interest in Hematology as a future specialty, it was one of the highlights of this experience, since I was able to see an incredible hematologist in action.

I spent the following day in the Cardiovascular Thrombosis Laboratory, directed by Dr. Grabowski. In the morning we discussed my future research project. Dr. Grabowski has ongoing research on HUS, in which I'm going to take part in the next phase. The aim of this research is to develop a possible treatment for this serious disease that as for now has only support as its management. The topic of the other research project I will work on is von Willebrand disease (vWD), in which Dr. Grabowski and his team are trying to increase the diagnostic accuracy for vWD patients. In the afternoon, Dr. Grabowski and Mr. Daniel Boyler, who is Dr. Grabowski's laboratory technician, dedicated their time to show and teach me how Dr. Grabowski's blood flow device works. As published by him in 2012, his flow system and flow device has many differences from other used devices (PFA-100, for example), as it does not use citrate as anticoagulant and the fact that the others do not permit direct, real time visualization of the forming platelet thrombi- It was absolutely fascinating to learn how blood rheology can be studied, and to see platelet aggregation in real time.

On Thursday, I shadowed Dr. Grabowski and Dr. Musolino in their Pediatric Stroke Clinic. Dr. Grabowski is one of the creators of the pediatric stroke service at MGH, and it was an honor to learn from him in this matter. This clinic day was really special, as I have never seen a service for children with ischemic and hemorrhagic strokes with such a complete and multidisciplinary care. I could see the difference in outcomes of children with this kind of care since the primary event (stroke) in comparison to the ones that did not have access to appropriate care. The conversations with the families were also a great learning experience for me. Dr. Grabowski and Dr. Musolino both have their own unique patient-doctor relationship with their patients, with empathy and kindness, and also an easily understandable way of explaining difficult subjects.

On Friday, I attended a pediatric hematology session about febrile neutropenia and after that I shadowed Dr. Bornikova, an adult hematologist who works with Dr. Grabowski. We had great discussions of topics such as Anemia, Thalassemias, Elyptocytosis, Chronic Diseases Anemia- She also showed me some blood smears from her patients. In the afternoon Mr. Boyler taught me how to extract cells from umbilical cords and how to culture them in Dr. Grabowski's laboratory.

After this incredible week in Boston, I attended along with Dr. Grabowski the THSNA Meeting in San Diego and the Research Colloquium: DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE RESEARCH CAREER IN HEMOSTASIS AND THROMBOSIS. The event was a delightfull experience. I had the opportunity to meet researchers, fellows and professors from other cities and countries. There were some amazing and enriching lectures, with topics that profoundly interest me. In the first day of the meeting, I was able to be present at the moment that Dr. Grabowski received an award as Founding President from the THSNA Board. It was a pleasure and an honor to be there in such a special moment. I was also able to watch Dr. Grabowski lecture on Pediatric Stroke, which was definitely a memorable moment to me.

In summary, this travel-award provided me an amazing, enriching, honorable and very special period, from which I hope to be able to take with me the very best. In June, I will start as Dr. Grabowski's Research

Fellow and this experience only made me look forward even more to starting the research projects with him.

