

Danko Kostadinov, MD, Bulgaria

ASCRS International Traveling Scholarship Report 2016

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It was a great honour and a privilege to have the opportunity to attend the Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, In Los Angeles this year. I was delighted to have the ability to give a brief talk about colorectal surgery in my country, but also to represent the Bulgarian Surgical Society in the International Colorectal Council Meeting.

This was my first visit to America and the international fellowship was an incredible opportunity for me in both professional and personal terms. Because of the scholarship I was able to visit not only the amazing cities like Los Angeles, Minneapolis and New York, but also to observe some of the leading colorectal centers in America. During the days of the meeting I attended a lot of symposiums, lectures and hands-on workshops. The meeting in Los Angeles was with more than 2000 delegates from all over the world, which is impressively attended and a good place to meet new friends. I think it was really useful for me because it will keep me up to date with the novelties in colorectal surgery.

After the meeting I decided to visit the Colorectal team at Mayo Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, where I spent 3 unforgettable weeks. Being in an extraordinary place like Mayo for me was like a dream come true. During that time I had the possibility to observe a lot of interesting operations, MDTs, ground rounds, ward rounds and clinics. Each day at Mayo gave me something to think about regarding my country's every day practice. There was a lot of useful information and interesting things that I must remember to share with all my colleagues in Bulgaria.

I was lucky to observe more than 70 different operations, which included robotic rectal resections; intraoperative radiation therapy; laparoscopic colonic and rectal resections; complex fistulas cases and etc. I had the possibility to see a lot of research, which was going through the department. It will be very difficult for me to find the right words to express my gratitude to all the team for their tremendous hospitality and for making me feel a part of the team. I think the only way is to make special mention of all of them – Dr Chua, Dr Dozois, Dr Kelley, Dr Devine, Dr Nelson, Dr Cima, Dr Larson, Dr Mathis and Dr Pemberton.



My next destination for observation was New York and especially Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Hospital, where I spent an amazing 3 days under the team of Dr Julio Garcia – Aguilar. `The Big Apple` is not a unique city only because of its beautiful architecture, it's size and breath taking views, but also for the MSKCC, one of the leading cancer centers. In New York I had the possibility to observe a lot of Colorectal Cancer operations, participate in a research meeting and meet a lot of friends from all over the world. I am really thankful to Dr Garcia – Aguilar for showing me their way of locally treating rectal cancers, which was really useful and a totally innovative procedure for our country. I was able to collect a lot of new ideas that I can discuss with the doctors in Bulgaria.

It's never easy to summarise emotions in a written report, but to realise that the trip was amazing and unforgettable it should have an end. I would like to say a special thanks to ASCRS for giving me the opportunity to attend the amazing annual meeting and visit some of the leading centers in the world. The scholarship was really unique and I am pretty sure that it will continue to develop more and more and allow residents from all over the world to touch the US surgery.