

**Celebrating 30 years**

**supporting young oncologists  
and enhancing careers**

# **ESMO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME**

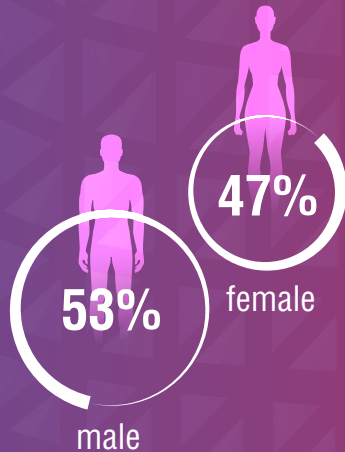
# ESMO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

1989

WELCOMING YOUNG  
ONCOLOGISTS

156 Research Fellows  
over 30 years

1999  
34 Fellows



2009  
93 Fellows

SHAPING  
PROFESSIONAL  
LIVES



58% went back home

28% stayed in the host country

7% moved to another country

7% moved within the same country

2019  
156 Fellows

INVESTING IN THE  
FUTURE OF ONCOLOGY



**Supporting**  
young professionals

**Developing**  
better oncologists

**Offering**  
life-changing experiences

**Improving**  
cancer patient care

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# THE ESMO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

## ENHANCING CAREERS SINCE 1989

For more than 30 years the ESMO Fellowship Programme has offered Fellowships to young oncologists, creating a band of over 500 medical oncologists with clear perspectives on future research potential. On average over the last 10 years 45 positions have been offered annually, 38 short-term and 7 long-term placements; these Fellowship recipients represent the future of research in their field.

In this booklet, past and present recipients describe their experience as ESMO Fellows and we hear from those who have completed the circle and become Fellowship mentors themselves, extending the opportunities associated with the Programme to a new generation of clinical researchers.

The Fellowship Committee (formerly the ESMO Fellowship and Award Committee) was established in 1997 to foster a career development programme through scholarships, as ESMO recognised the value of educating young individuals specialising in medical oncology. The current Chair, Evandro de Azambuja, is the seventh to hold this position and is supported by seven Committee Members (Pilar Garrido Lopez, Valentina Guarneri, Martin Reck, Vladimir Moiseyenko, Matthias Preusser, Angela Lamarca, Jürgen Wolf).

ESMO Oncology Fellows have been drawn from 75 countries within and beyond Europe, and achieving a gender balance among Fellows has been a particular focus of the past decade. Echoing the success of the Women for Oncology Initiative, created in 2013 following the vision of Martine Piccart (ESMO President 2012–2013 and former Chair of the Fellowship Committee 2007–2009), the 156 recipients of long-term Fellowships average a 53%:47% male:female ratio, highlighting ESMO's aim to support male and female oncologists alike as they become leaders in our field.

### Fellowship Committee Chairs

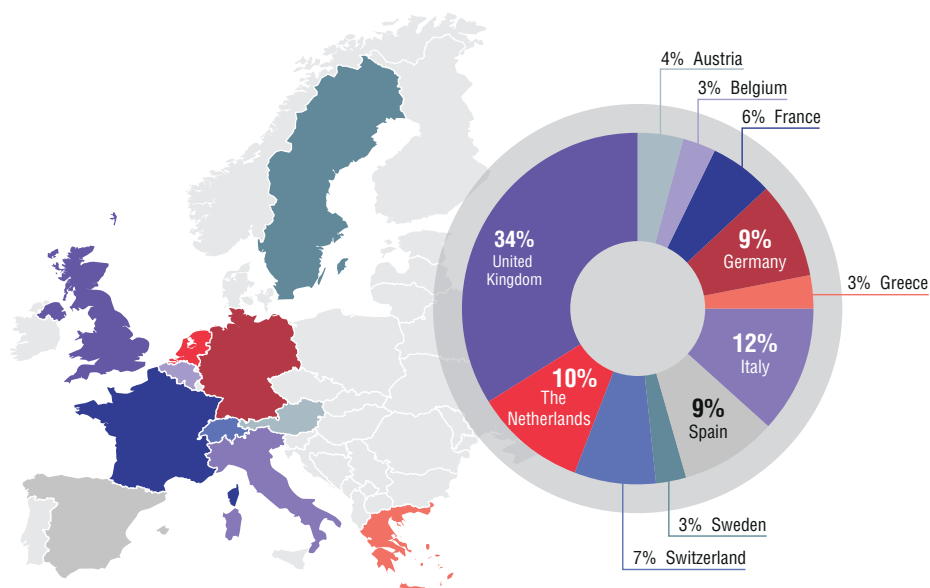
1997 – 2001	▶	Stan Kaye, UK
2002 – 2004	▶	Christian Dittich, Austria
2005 – 2006	▶	Thomas Tursz, France
2007 – 2009	▶	Martine Piccart, Belgium
2010 – 2014	▶	Josep Tabernero, Spain
2015 – 2017	▶	Christoph Zielinski, Austria
2018 to date	▶	Evandro de Azambuja, Belgium

Of course, such success requires investment, and ESMO has devoted nearly €10M to the Fellowship Programme since its conception. Indeed, since 2009 ESMO has significantly increased financial support for the Programme, investing more than €4M for long-term and €1M for short-term Fellowships.

## ESMO Fellowship Programme 2019

- More than €800K given to support a total of 70 Fellows (62 in short-term programmes; 8 in long-term programmes)
- Since 2009 a further €5M has been invested in the Fellowship Programme
- Investments in short-term programmes has seen significant growth since 2009
- 2019 Research Fellows: Giacomo Bregni, Carlo Cattrini, Gabor Dobos, Elenora Ghisoni, Asuka Kawachi-Kawai, Ignacio Matos Garcia, Laura Mezquita Pérez, Mariela Vasileva-Slaveva

We extend our thanks to the host institutions and the many mentors who give their time to the Fellowship Programme. Without their generosity of spirit it would be impossible to nurture the talented young oncologists who are such an important part of ESMO. From short-term educational visits lasting a few days to clinical programmes from six weeks to one year and Research Fellowships lasting up to two years, the ESMO Oncology Fellowship Programme is a unique opportunity for medical oncologists that we are proud to support.



\*For full list of host institutions please see page 26 for details.



**JOSEP TABERNEO**  
ESMO President  
(2018–2019)

# REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

## A WORD FROM THE ESMO PRESIDENT

Just one of ESMO's many initiatives aimed at serving and responding to the needs of our younger members is its Cancer Research Fellowship Programme. Bearing the tagline *Making better professionals*, this superb undertaking continues to do just that.


By providing essential support and a broad range of educational and exchange opportunities for our young talents, this Programme is pivotal in preparing our up-and-coming generation of medical oncologists for the growing pressures and daily challenges faced by our profession. Critically, the 75% soar in cancer cases by 2030 as predicted by the International Agency for Research on Cancer will only exacerbate the heavy demands that naturally come with the pursuit of excellence in oncology.

Furthermore, considering the already serious shortfall of medical oncologists in many countries, ESMO is even more dedicated to promoting early stage careers – and beyond – than ever before. Also in close collaboration with our Young Oncologists Committee (YOC), currently led by Guillem Argilés from my own Institute – the Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology (VHIO – Barcelona, Spain), ESMO seeks to identify, tackle and resolve the very real issues encountered by our junior colleagues, including the well-documented issue of burnout.

It does so through an established array of educational opportunities including its European Integration, Research, and Palliative Care Fellowships as well as the Clinical Unit and Translational Research Unit Visits. Under the current chairmanship of Evandro de Azambuja, Jules Bordet Institute (Brussels, Belgium), ESMO's Fellowship Committee continues to fortify existing programmes, as well as expand its portfolio to respond to the rapidly changing needs of our profession through especially tailored trainings and mentorships.

In this respect, while the current era of precision medicine in oncology brings fresh hope and new, more potent anti-cancer strategies for an increasing number of patients, it nevertheless poses many important questions as to how we can move forward to ensure that laboratory-driven discovery is directly applied to patients, and from the clinical side, tumours are analysed at the molecular level in the laboratory.

ESMO's Fellowship Programme undoubtedly plays a central role in delivering on these ambitions.



Building on its 30-year success story chaptered by ESMO leaders past, Programme champions and its equally dedicated mentors, concerted efforts centre on closely connecting our junior colleagues with other specialties and disciplines along with the new contenders in cancer science and medicine, as well as those emerging areas with important relevance to our field.

One future direction might include the partnering of fields to more effectively treat comorbidities in cancer patients. With cancer now the number one cause of death in high-income countries, and cardiovascular disease claiming the most lives among middle-aged adults globally, cardio-oncology is certainly an emerging field of collaboration and thus, potentially a focus area of ESMO's educational offerings to come.

As we celebrate 30 years' protecting and nurturing the future of our profession, there have been myriad Programme triumphs. Having had the honour to serve as a former Chair of ESMO's Fellowship Committee, as well as Mentor of the YOC, I am fortunate and proud to have witnessed first-hand just how these opportunities can really grow the careers of our leaders-in-the-making. For many, ESMO Fellowships also seed other exciting opportunities. As an example, in my dual capacity as Director of VHIO – incidentally an appointed host institute of this Programme – and Head of the Medical Oncology Department of the Vall d'Hebron University Hospital, I have seen just how ESMO's early career development programmes have helped to propel the professional paths of younger faculty.

To name but one, Leticia De Mattos-Arruda (at the time a Medical Oncologist at Vall d'Hebron), who was recipient of a 2010 ESMO Research Fellowship – Translational Focus. This Award enabled her to expand her translational research in breast cancer metastasis overseas, and she later returned to VHIO in 2017 as PI of Applied Genetics of Metastatic Cancer. Reflective of her development as a translational-clinical investigator, spurred through ESMO's early recognition, she was subsequently selected to participate in our Society's prestigious Leaders Generation Programme Class of 2017 alongside VHIO's Rodrigo Dienstmann, Principal Investigator of our Oncology Data Science Group, followed by Elena Élez, Medical Oncologist and Clinical Investigator of our Gastrointestinal & Endocrine Tumors Group who was invited to join the Class of 2018. These are merely examples from my own Institute. There are so many more promising talents who have demonstrated the potential and promise to benefit from these excellent opportunities.

It is thanks to ESMO's Fellowship Programme that we have been able to further the careers of our younger colleagues and in so doing, protect the new talents who are already advancing cancer discovery and the treatment and care of those who matter most-our patients. We must all consequently continue to invest in them as future thought leaders and trailblazers in oncology.



**EVANDRO DE AZAMBUJA**

*Jules Bordet Institute,  
Brussels,  
Belgium*

## FOREWORD FROM THE ESMO FELLOWSHIP CHAIR

Announcing ESMO Fellowship recipients is always a pleasure, and I am particularly delighted to be doing so this year, in the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ESMO Fellowship Programme. The Programme has supported the continuous education of hundreds of young oncologists in the fields of clinical and laboratory research, fostering career development through a broad programme of scholarships.

As Chair of the ESMO Fellowship Committee, my mission and that of my colleagues who are the Committee Members, has been to promote professional development, research, education and the science of medical oncology; to encourage networking between oncology institutes and oncology Fellows; and to highlight the importance of mentors in supervising and guiding young oncologists. In doing so, we invest in the driving force of future developments in oncology research and continuously propel improvements in the quality of care for cancer patients. As a mentor I have witnessed at first hand the opportunities this Programme offers recipients and I am honoured to be furthering this legacy during my time as Chair.

As a former member of the ESMO Young Oncologists Committee and a Faculty Member of the ESMO Leaders Generation Programme I know well the ongoing contributions many of our Fellows make to our society long after their Fellowship has ended. My own home institution, Jules Bordet Institute (Brussels, Belgium), has hosted numerous Fellowship recipients over the years... and we are delighted to welcome a 2019 Fellow to our fold. I will be watching with keen interest as all the 2019 award recipients pursue their research and develop their careers.

Approximately 49% of our 23,000 ESMO members are aged 40 or under and thus meet the society's definition of young oncologists. A research experience abroad is truly enriching and I would encourage each and every one of you to apply for an ESMO Fellowship.







**ANGELA LAMARCA**

*The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, Manchester, United Kingdom*

## LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES ON THE ESMO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME: A SUCCESSFUL START TO ANGELA LAMARCA'S CAREER IN MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Angela Lamarca undertook her training in medical oncology at the Hospital Universitario La Paz in Madrid, Spain. She was awarded a Fellowship in 2012 as part of the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Translational Fellowship Programme, and moved to the Christie NHS Foundation Trust in Manchester, UK in January 2013. During her Fellowship she was involved in a clinical trial evaluating the feasibility of imaging proliferation and nucleoside transport using <sup>18</sup>F-fluorothymidine positron emission tomography (FLT PET) imaging in patients with advanced pancreatic cancer. Since completing the Fellowship, Angela has been appointed as a consultant at the Christie NHS Foundation Trust, where she continues her career as a clinical and translational researcher.

Since completing your Fellowship, you have remained at your host institution. Has this enabled you to further your research?

While the Fellowship is usually linked to a specific project, there are plenty of opportunities to work on different projects, which allows a wider exposure to the research at the host institution. Staying at The Christie beyond my ESMO Fellowship period has allowed me to complete many projects.

What top tips will you be presenting at the Young Oncologist (YO) Track Session at the ESMO Congress in Barcelona?

My aim is to give an insight into my experience and the huge impact that the ESMO Fellowship Programme has had on my career. To have a successful experience perseverance and resilience are key, together with a supportive mentor and environment. My mentor, Professor Juan Valle, has been outstanding and I will always be grateful to him. However, it is important to understand that even with a supportive mentor, the Fellow has also to be enthusiastic for the partnership to work.

Do you feel the Fellowship provided opportunities within ESMO to represent the Society and serve on committees?

The ESMO Fellowship, together with my participation in the ESMO Leaders Generation Programme in 2017, provided me with the opportunity of being an active member of the ESMO community. Since 2017, I have been a member of the Fellowship Committee, the Press and Media Affairs Committee, and also a Faculty Member of the Neuroendocrine, Endocrine Neoplasms and CUP (cancer of unknown primary) group. During the ESMO 2017 Congress I was part of the editorial team of the *Daily Reporter*.



“ *A successful Fellowship requires successful teamwork.* ”

In addition to the ESMO Committees, did the Fellowship provide opportunities to network and present at other Congresses?

The ESMO Fellowship allowed me to focus my career on my area of interest: clinical and translational research in hepato-pancreato-biliary and neuroendocrine tumours. Following my ESMO Fellowship I secured funding to prolong my Fellowship for two more years with the Spanish Society of Medical Oncology (SEOM) Clinical Research Fellowship (2016) and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Conquer Cancer Foundation Young Investigator Award (2017). I am now in the process of becoming an independent researcher with active involvement in relevant networks such as the International Biliary Tract Cancer Collaborators (IBTCC), the European Network for the Study of Cholangiocarcinoma (ENS-CCA) and the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Gastrointestinal Cancer Group (EORTC-GITCG) Hepato-biliary Task Force. Over the last seven years, I have published 52 papers in peer-reviewed journals (including original research in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* and *Journal of Clinical Oncology*) and presented at international conferences including ASCO Annual Meeting, ESMO Congress, European Neuroendocrine Tumor Society (ENETS) Conference, ASCO Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium and World Congress on Gastrointestinal Cancer. One of the biggest moments of recognition was the life-time opportunity to present the results of a phase III trial at ASCO 2019.

Do you think you may one day go back to Spain?

I never expected to prolong my stay in the UK beyond my Fellowship, but here I am seven years later! I hope I can find the way of returning to Spain and applying my knowledge and skills in my home country, which is the ultimate aim of these Fellowships.

Looking ahead, would you consider being a host/mentor to a Fellow?

I would be delighted to be the host for a Fellow; being a Fellow in the past has given me an insight into what ESMO expects and needs. It would also be my way of giving back to ESMO and future generations.

“ *I can never thank ESMO enough for giving me the opportunity to start this amazing journey!* ”



**MARCUS JOERGER**

*Cantonal Hospital St. Gallen,  
St. Gallen,  
Switzerland*

## ESMO TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP OPENS DOORS

Now Chair of the Medical Oncology Clinical Research Facility at Cantonal Hospital St. Gallen, Markus Joerger was awarded a European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Translational Research Fellowship in 2003 at The Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI), Amsterdam. His research focused on pharmacokinetic and pharmacogenetic profiling in solid cancer patients.

The ESMO Translational Research Fellowship offered me a unique possibility to delve deeply into the field of translational research, almost a prerequisite to understanding today's rapid developments in the field of oncology. The Netherlands Cancer Institute is without doubt one of the leading European facilities in cancer treatment and research, and a fascinating place to benefit from cutting-edge developments in this field.

Over the years, I have maintained close collaborations with my former colleagues at NKI, and we have common projects. As recently as this year I have co-authored a paper published with my colleagues at NKI – the relationships you develop as part of the ESMO Fellowship Programme can be long-lasting and continue to benefit your research decades after you have returned to your home institution and developed your career.

I am a member of the ESMO Press & Media Affairs Committee – we are in charge of developing the ESMO press strategy. Among our many functions we work to provide information and commentary on current medical oncology, cancer and cancer-related issues to allow the community to develop an educated judgement. In addition to being the Editor-in-Chief of the official newspaper *Daily Reporter* for two consecutive years, I have been a featured Associate Editor for a number of years.

What was your experience of the Fellowship Programme?

Your Fellowship was at NKI; do you still collaborate with the Institute/colleagues on projects?

Have you been involved in ESMO in any other way since completing your Fellowship?



*“ The international flavour of the Institute and high degree of innovation and technical equipment added to a unique experience. ”*

Has the Fellowship provided you with opportunities to network and become involved with other groups – do you serve on any other committees?

The ESMO Fellowship opened crucial doors for my career as an oncologist-scientist in the field of drug development. I am heavily involved with the Swiss Group for Clinical Cancer Research (SAKK); researchers in the SAKK network regularly exchange scientific knowledge and findings in indication-specific project groups, and I currently chair the phase-1 New Anticancer Treatments Group. I am also Chair of the Central European Society for Anticancer Drug Research (CESAR-EWIV) Phase III Working Group and a steering committee member of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Pharmacology and Molecular Medicines Group (EORTC-PAMM).

Fellowship applications open again next year – do you have any advice for someone thinking of applying?

The ESMO Fellowship Programme offers a unique opportunity as the European cancer community grows stronger, more competitive and increasingly connected. International exposure becomes even more vital to the work of an oncologist interested in clinical research, so I would encourage anyone who is interested to explore the opportunities offered by ESMO to support their professional development through involvement in high-quality clinical and research projects.

*“ Cantonal Hospital St. Gallen is proud to host ESMO Fellows, and we will keep offering training to young oncologist researchers. ”*



**MATTEO LAMBERTINI**  
University of Genova,  
Genova,  
Italy

## ADVANCING FERTILITY CARE IN YOUNG BREAST CANCER PATIENTS – THE ULTIMATE GOAL FOR MATTEO LAMBERTINI

Matteo Lambertini was the recipient of a 2016 European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Translational Research Fellowship. His project, *Liquid Biomarkers during Fertility Preserving Procedures in BRCA Mutated Breast Cancer Patients*, contributed to improvements in the understanding of many controversial aspects related to the management of breast cancer in young women. Specifically focusing on fertility preservation, Dr Lambertini's research formed the basis of his PhD thesis, recently completed at the University of Brussels, *Unmet Fertility and Pregnancy-related Issues in Young Breast Cancer Patients*, with the ultimate goal of furthering improvements in the care and quality of life.

2019 saw you move back to Italy, your home country. It must have been a huge decision both professionally and personally – since being back, how is your research going?

Upon completing my 2-year ESMO Fellowship at the Jules Bordet Institute, I was offered the opportunity to stay in Belgium and practice there. My wife Giulia, a biologist, had a position at the research lab of the same institution, so the decision to move back to Italy was not easy. However, after she became pregnant our desire to be closer to our family and friends increased and when an academic position became available back at the National Cancer Institute in Genova working alongside my Italian mentor, Professor Lucia Del Mastro, it was perfect timing for our return to Italy. I am now building a research team in Genova and trying to involve young Fellows in my research activities.

You have been travelling around the world presenting on fertility preservation and safety of pregnancy after treatment for breast cancer. How have you found this experience?

My research interests focus on the fertility, and pregnancy related issues that young women face after a diagnosis with breast cancer. I have presented the results of our research on many important stages, including the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium and the European Breast Cancer Conference, as well as the ESMO and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) meetings.

As a young medical oncologist, these experiences have been very important for my professional growth; however, nothing is as important to me as knowing that the results of these studies will help change the life of young women worldwide. This is the most important message that I give to my Fellows: before embarking on any research effort, be sure that it has the potential to improve the care of our patients. If the final goal is just to present the research at a major conference and have an additional publication on their CV, I strongly suggest they invest that time (and money) on something else.



*“ I have worked and collaborated with leading national and international experts in the field, which has played a crucial role in deepening my clinical and research skills. ”*

How has the ESMO Fellowship Programme helped to enhance your clinical research and career?

An ESMO Translational Research Visit at the Christie Hospital in Manchester opened the door for me to the international environment and, thanks to an ESMO Clinical Unit Visit at the Jules Bordet Institute, I made the right contacts (including my great mentor Professor Evandro de Azambuja) to help me return a few years later on an ESMO Translational Research Fellowship. These opportunities have been crucial in expanding my professional network and provided me with funding to cover two years of my PhD abroad. The research projects developed as part of my ESMO Fellowship have been a key component of the success (and final thesis) of my PhD.

Opening doors – do you feel your Fellowship led to opportunities within ESMO to represent the Society and serve on committees?

The ESMO Fellowship Programme gives you international exposure in the research field but it can also be the launch pad for being more involved within ESMO, a society that strongly believes in and supports young oncologists from the beginning of their career. During my ESMO Translational Research Fellowship, I was accepted into the Leaders Generation Programme, an exciting course specifically created for young oncologists to provide training for future leaders. I am now a member of the Young Oncologists Committee (YOC), the ESMO Press and Media Affairs Committee, and the ESMO Breast Cancer Faculty. I have been involved in the *Daily Reporter* newspaper during the annual ESMO Congress and, in addition, I am helping to develop the ESMO Guidelines on fertility preservation in cancer patients.

Fellowship applications open again next year – do you have any advice for someone thinking of applying?

I believe that every young oncologist who is passionate about his/her work should take advantage of the ESMO Fellowship Programme. This can be ‘The Step’ in a young oncologist’s career that really makes a difference and will change forever his/her professional (and personal) life. To my mind, there is no better way to experience working outside your country, networking and conducting high-quality research that may really improve the care of your patients. Whilst your CV will obviously be considered during the selection process, particularly for long-term Fellowships, motivation, perseverance and finding a good mentor abroad are the keys for a successful application.

Looking ahead, would you consider being a host/mentor to a Fellow?

As an associate professor, mentoring young Fellows is one of my favourite new tasks back in Italy – I hope to be for them what my great mentors have been and are for me. My research unit has several ongoing clinical and translational projects and I would be honoured to host young, motivated Fellows from other countries with the support of an ESMO Fellowship. I believe that together we could build a strong proposal for the application process, creating a project to enhance his/her career but above all to further improve the care of young patients with breast cancer.



**SHERENE LOI**  
Peter MacCallum Cancer  
Centre, Melbourne,  
Australia

## ESMO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME FUNDING OFFERS DEDICATED RESEARCH TIME TO YOUNG CLINICIANS


Sherene Loi is Head of the Translational Breast Cancer Genomics and Therapeutics laboratory at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne, as well as Consultant Medical Oncologist in the Breast Service and Head of the Breast Cancer Clinical Trials Unit. She embarked on a European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Translational Research Fellowship at the Jules Bordet Institute in Brussels, Belgium in 2007, working with mentors Martine Piccart and Christos Sotiriou in the field of gene expression profiling of breast cancers.

Has the ESMO Fellowship Programme helped to enhance your clinical research and career? Do you still collaborate with your colleagues from this time?

The ESMO Fellowship provided me financial support to allow me to conduct further research. This is so important for clinicians as it is hard to get dedicated time to focus on research. I undertook my Translational Research Fellowship at the Jules Bordet Institute over ten years ago and we still collaborate on many projects today.

“Financial support to undertake further research is so important for clinicians – it is hard to get dedicated time to focus on research.”





*“ The Fellowship launched my research into the immune microenvironment of breast cancer. ”*

Did the research conducted as part of the Fellowship provide key results/observations for you to take back to Melbourne and continue researching?

You live in Australia – that is a long way from Europe! Do you have ongoing opportunities to participate in ESMO activities since completing your Fellowship?

Fellowship applications open again next year – would you consider being a mentor to an aspiring Fellow?

Yes, the Fellowship launched my research into the immune microenvironment of breast cancer. Tumour-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs) are immune biomarkers that have been shown to be associated with improved prognosis in some groups of patients with breast cancer, and our work has recently been included in early breast cancer Guidelines by ESMO and the St Gallen Consensus Conference.

Yes – in fact, my career takes me all over the world. I am on a number of scientific advisory and steering committees and give talks at many conferences, including ESMO. I am Co-chair of the Translational Working Group of the International Breast Cancer Study Group (IBCSG) based in Bern, Switzerland. I am looking forward to presenting the education session ‘HER2 overexpressing breast cancer’ at ESMO 2019. I am also the Breast Cancer Track Co-Chair for the ESMO-Asia meeting in November 2019, in Singapore.

Since I completed my Fellowship there has been an increase in the number of females taking part in the programme. The ESMO Women for Oncology Committee (W4O) was set up in 2015: currently led by the incoming ESMO President, Solange Peters, the W4O promotes equal career development opportunities for female oncologists. I strongly encourage all females to apply to the Fellowship Programme. As part of an Australian institution, I am not eligible to host an ESMO Fellow, however I encourage all my eligible colleagues, particularly the women, to consider applying to the ESMO Fellowship Programme.



**SOPHIE POSTEL-VINAY**  
Gustave Roussy Institute,  
Villejuif, France

## PASSING ON THE BATON: ESMO FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT BECOMES MENTOR TO A NEW GENERATION OF ONCOLOGISTS

Sophie Postel-Vinay, Clinician Scientist at the INSERM Research Unit at the Gustave Roussy Institute, Paris, undertook a European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Translational Research Fellowship in 2010–2012 at the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR), London, working with Alan Ashworth and Chris Lord, in collaboration with Jean-Charles Soria and Fabrice André at Gustave Roussy, France. She describes her Fellowship as a fantastic experience: *I was full-time in the laboratory, studying synthetic lethality in ERCC1-deficient Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC). Having the opportunity to perform this Fellowship confirmed that I wanted to become a physician scientist and continue doing fundamental research alongside clinical work.*

Sophie's project, Investigation of DNA repair deficiencies in NSCLC and therapeutic applications using synthetic lethality, was the first brick of a collaboration that is still ongoing and is indeed expanding: after becoming a Physician Scientist at the Gustave Roussy Institute, she returned to the ICR and re-initiated active collaborations between Chris Lord's team and her own in France. She now spends part of the week in London and part at Gustave Roussy; one post-doc researcher has moved from Paris to London to concretely reinforce the collaboration and others will follow in the coming years.

“ *This Fellowship provided me with the unique opportunity to perform a full-time PhD and build a collaboration with the Institute of Cancer Research, which is ongoing and expanding; this has been game-changing for my career and for the outcome of multiple collaborative projects: I am extremely grateful to ESMO for this.* ”

Her clinical research is not all that has benefitted from Sophie's involvement in ESMO. She was a member of the ESMO Young Oncology Committee for several years: as well as networking with young oncologists from across Europe and becoming involved in a number of exciting clinical research projects she helped to organise sessions at various ESMO Congresses. She is now extending the Fellowship experience by mentoring and hosting Asuka Kawachi-Kawai (National Cancer Research Institute, Tokyo, Japan) for the next two years on an ESMO Research Fellowship.

“ I want to thank the ESMO Fellowship Committee for having initially selected my application for a Fellowship, and having helped Asuka by selecting her this year: my experience as an ESMO Fellow has been a game-changing step for my career and I will always remain extremely grateful to ESMO for having provided me with such an opportunity. I have no doubt that Asuka will greatly benefit from it as well and I will do my best for her so that her experience is a success as well. ”

Sophie explains that working in a different country is enriching but different from what you may have known before: every research team has a different organisation, and she has taken back to France some aspects of her experience at the ICR that she found particularly relevant and useful. She is now looking forward to mentoring Asuka as she embarks on her ESMO Research Fellowship, *Identification of novel therapeutic targets in desmoplastic small round cell sarcoma (DSRCT)*.

“Asuka has been working at the Gustave Roussy for a year as part of the *Diplôme Universitaire Européen de Recherche Translationnelle & Clinique en Cancérologie (DUERTECC)* programme and applied for the ESMO Fellowship to allow her to develop and complete the research she has started. As a mentor, this represents lots of responsibilities, both towards Asuka, who will have spent three years away from her family, friends and country to develop her career, but also toward ESMO, who are facilitating her stay in France and trusting us to make this programme a success; I will be fully committed to ensure this.”



**ASUKA KAWACHI-KAWAI**  
Gustave Roussy Institute,  
Villejuif, France (National Cancer  
Research Institute, Tokyo, Japan)

During her initial year in France, Asuka had to adapt to a new country, new culture, new language and new work environment, but she has also achieved some very promising results in the laboratory. Despite the language barrier, she has integrated well into the team and Gustave Roussy is now looking forward to developing a new collaboration with the National Cancer Research Institute in Tokyo: Professor Kan Yonemori (Asuka's home mentor) and his colleagues will be visiting the Gustave Roussy, in September 2019.

The prospect of starting her ESMO Research Fellowship is exciting to Asuka:

“ Participating in the ESMO Research Fellowship is a unique opportunity for me. No equivalent programme currently exists in Japan, and I am extremely enthusiastic about the opportunity to pursue this translational and clinical research with Dr Postel-Vinay. I have a keen interest in sarcoma and rare diseases and I am excited to translate my research findings from the laboratory into the clinic. The programme developed by Dr Postel-Vinay goes from bench to bedside and from bedside to bench: I strongly believe that such approaches can be transformative in patient care. ”



**IRA-IDA SKVORTSOVA**  
Innsbruck Medical University,  
Innsbruck, Austria

## SHARING A PROFESSIONAL PASSION UNDERPINNED BY PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCE

Ira-Ida Skvortsova has been a member of the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) since 1996. As an assistant professor at the Altai State Medical University (Barnaul, Siberia), Ira-Ida was interested in immune response and immunotherapy in cancer patients and in 1998-1999 she took part in an ESMO Research Fellowship with Heinz Zwierzina at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. Having experienced a difficult family history of cancer, with both her parents affected, Ira-Ida's studies on the molecular signature underlying radiation response in cancer patients have a personal as well as professional motivation. With the encouragement of Dr Zwierzina, Ira-Ida remained in Innsbruck after her Fellowship, going on to build a laboratory team focussing on translational research: the Laboratory for Experimental and Translational Radiation Oncology (EXTRO-Lab).

“ *My ESMO Research Fellowship provided me with an opportunity to learn how to plan clinically-relevant projects, to write scientific papers, work in the laboratory and use the scientific data in clinical practice, to write and submit the research project proposals and to manage the overlapping projects.* ”

With the support of the EXTRO-Lab team, Ira-Ida actively participates in national and international conferences, organising a conference series on Cancer Stem Cells and Cancer Metastasis. These conferences bring together preclinical and clinical researchers to work toward the elucidation of the molecular mechanisms associated with cancer metastasis which could help improve outcomes in patients with metastatic disease. As a Guest Editor for a number of scientific journals, Ira-Ida has championed collaborations between these conferences and a number of journal publishers to deliver educational talks for researchers about successful publication in the scientific journals.

Professional relationships developed during her ESMO Research Fellowship remain a cornerstone of Ira-Ida's scientific activities, and despite not returning to Altai State she remains in contact with her Siberian colleagues. This open outlook is reflected in the international EXTRO-Lab team, which includes Austrian, Serbian, Italian, Georgian

“Despite continuous efforts to improve outcomes in patients with metastatic breast cancer, the overall survival rates in those with brain metastases remains poor. With a global obesity epidemic that may contribute to the metastatic and survival phenotype of breast carcinoma cells, this research project has a high clinical impact. Although we have two clinicians in the team who help us with clinical studies, we were looking for a researcher who will concurrently work on the preclinical and clinical parts of the project. As an oncologist and cancer researcher involved in preclinical and clinical activities, Mariela is an ideal candidate for that.”

lab members and is visited often by collaborators from the USA, Germany, Switzerland, Slovenia, India, Hungary. In November they are to be joined by Mariela Vasileva-Slaveva (Alexandrovska University Hospital and Medical University, Sofia, Bulgaria) as she embarks on an ESMO Research Fellowship with her project, *Breast cancer metastasis and lipid metabolism implication*. Ira-Ida was impressed by Mariela’s work on biobanking in Bulgaria and collaborated with her to create a project proposal to link this with EXTRO-Lab’s research in the role of lipid metabolism in the treatment of breast cancer metastasis. Mariela will work on the preclinical and clinical parts of the project, conducting her research with international collaborators in Haifa to confirm their work on biomarkers to predict chemotherapy response in patients with metastatic breast cancer.



**MARIELA VASILEVA-SLAVEVA**  
Innsbruck Medical University,  
Innsbruck, Austria (Alexandrovska  
University Hospital, Sofia, Bulgaria)

As a pioneer of translational research in her home department, Mariela established a new collaboration between departments and institutions to organise the first Cancer Biobank at Sofia Medical University, collecting tissue and blood from patients with breast and colorectal cancer. In 2017 she participated as an expert in the creation of the National Guidelines for Predictive Biomarkers in Clinical Oncology in Bulgaria.

“I believe that working on this project at EXTRO-Lab as part of an ESMO Research Fellowship will strengthen my research on my return to Bulgaria. There is an urgent need to improve cancer management in Bulgaria and only people with strong scientific background and knowledge, acquired abroad in centres of excellence, can make that change.”



**DAVID OLMOS**  
National Cancer Research  
Center (CNIO), Madrid,  
Spain

## CREATING A DIFFERENT KIND OF FAMILY THROUGH THE ESMO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

David Olmos (Spanish National Cancer Research Centre, Madrid, Spain) credits his ESMO Fellowship with being a cornerstone in his professional career. In 2006 he was working in a medium-sized training hospital with a tremendously heavy patient care workload for both trainees and faculty, gaining a lot of experience managing cancer patients but brimming with questions around biology and treatment. An ESMO Fellowship at the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust and the Institute of Cancer Research in London connected Dr Olmos with Professors Johann de Bono, Stan Kaye and Ian Judson, who he describes as “*fantastic mentors, some of the best in their fields, who guided me on the path to becoming a Clinician Scientist.*”

Coming from sunny southern Spain, adapting to life in London was initially very hard for Dr Olmos, but London is an exciting and multicultural city, full of life and opportunities. Furthermore, through working in the Marsden as a Fellow he met colleagues who had come from all around the world to train – indeed, many of them became really good friends and one, his wife. The ‘Marsden DDU (Drug Development Unit) crowd’, as they call themselves, still try to meet for dinner at every ESMO or ASCO meeting they attend.

“*The ESMO Fellowship Programme has excelled over the last 30 years in supporting young oncologists starting their academic careers through periods when the physician scientist has been an endangered species.*”

In the spirit of continuing this legacy, Dr Olmos is now embarking on a new phase in his Fellowship journey: alongside Elena Castro, another former ESMO Fellow, he is now himself mentor to Carlo Cattrini (University of Genova, Italy). “*Becoming an ESMO Fellowship mentor is both a great responsibility and a great honour. I am fully committed to Carlo’s success, and not just during his ESMO Fellowship: becoming his mentor is also a personal commitment to support his future career and his personal growth.*”



**CARLO CATTRINI**  
National Cancer Research Center  
(CNIO), Madrid, Spain (San  
Martino Polyclinic Hospital, Italy)

Dr Cattrini's project, *BRCA2MEN: an international, multicentre, observational and ambispective study to validate the predictive value of germline BRCA2 mutations in selecting first-line metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC) treatment* is a continuation of interest in this field piqued during a 2016 ESMO Preceptorship on Prostate Cancer. An international collaboration that will screen between 1500 and 2000 patients for germline DNA repair gene mutations, the aim is to establish a map of genetic alterations prevalence associated with prostate cancer worldwide, and to confirm how different genes impact outcomes.

“ I feel grateful and honoured to be awarded with this prestigious ESMO Fellowship. It is a unique opportunity that will enable me to acquire invaluable training in prostate cancer genetics, with the mentorship of Dr Olmos and Dr Castro, who are considered world leaders in this field and are working in one of the most important cancer research centres in Europe. ”

Francesco Boccardo (University of Genova, Italy) is also singled out for his mentorship during Dr Cattrini's early training as a medical oncologist, supporting his participation in the ESMO Preceptorship on Prostate Cancer and subsequent collaborations with the Prostate Cancer Research Team in Madrid. Dr Cattrini is already looking forward to the time when he will return to Italy, where he plans to continue his research programme as a PhD student, contributing new skills to the research projects of the University of Genova and reinforcing its role in the European research networks. There is an African proverb; *'It takes a village to raise a child.'* It seems that, in the global pursuit of cancer research, raising a Clinician Scientist is the work of a truly international family.

## TESTIMONIALS FROM PAST FELLOWS



### **CHRISTOPH OING**

*The University of Manchester, Manchester Cancer Research Centre  
Manchester, United Kingdom*

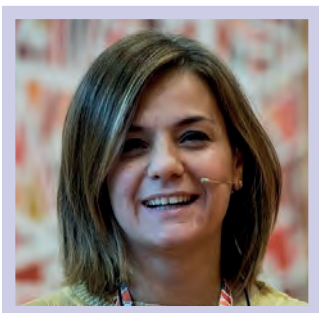
The Fellowship Programme is a tremendous offer from ESMO to foster career path of young medical oncologists. I am extremely grateful to ESMO for funding my Translational Research Fellowship at the Manchester Cancer Research Centre, which gave me the opportunity to implement my own comprehensive research project together with Professor Robert Bristow and Professor Silke Gillessen as renowned and highly supportive mentors. The experience I gained and the network I was able to build will sustainably impact my future career in medical oncology and translational research. So, thank you ESMO.



### **BENJAMIN BESSE**

*Institute Gustave Roussy,  
Villejuif, France*

The ESMO Fellowship Programme has deeply impacted my career. The ESMO grant helped me to set up a year of translational research in Barcelona. That year opened my mind scientifically but also made me grow-up as a doctor and a human being.



### **ERIKA MARTINELLI**

*Università degli Studi "Luigi Vanvitelli",  
Naples, Italy*

It was a fantastic experience that opened my mind from a scientific and human point of view; an important moment of growth. I had the opportunity to meet people and create networks that still exist today. Definitely favouring my career.





### **FEDERICO CAPPUZZO**

*AUSL Romagna-Ravenna  
Italy*

The ESMO Fellowship is a fantastic experience. ESMO gives the unique opportunity to work in a different country together with the most relevant experts in the field of cancer therapy. In addition, ESMO allows young medical oncologists to understand differences in treating cancer patients across Europe, highlighting the relevance for a multidisciplinary approach. Last but not least the ESMO Fellowship is a fantastic way to meet and familiarise with other colleagues, establishing networks and collaborations; essential elements for cancer research.



### **ALEJANDRA ARMENGOL**

*Instituto Nacional De Ciencias Medicas y Nutricion,  
Mexico City, Mexico*

I firmly believe that the ESMO Fellowship Programme has profoundly impacted the professional and personal lives of many oncologists in the world. As a Latin American doctor, woman, mother and vascular brain disease survivor I can only be deeply grateful. In year 2011 (when I was chosen for the clinical research Fellowship) the young Mexican oncologists didn't have many opportunities for professional growth which was a pity because in Mexico there has always been great talents. I am very happy and feel very accomplished in my professional practice dedicated to breast cancer.



### **LETICIA DE MATTOS-ARRUDA**

*Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology (VHIO)  
Barcelona, Spain*

The ESMO Translational Fellowship allowed me to have a global vision and a first-hand experience in translational research. The Programme gave me the opportunity to embark in liquid biopsy research and to give the first steps towards becoming a clinician scientist. I am very grateful to ESMO!

# LIST OF HOST INSTITUTIONS

Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, UK	Institut Jules Bordet, Brussels, Belgium	St. James Institute of Oncology, Bexley Wing St. James University Hospital, Leeds, UK
Allgemeines Krankenhaus der Stadt Wien (AKH Wien) Vienna, Austria	Institute Curie, Paris, France	Swiss Group for Clinical Cancer Research SAKK, Bern, Switzerland
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Centre, Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA	Istituto Oncologico Veneto, IRCCS, Padova, Italy	Tenovus Institute for Cancer Research, University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff, UK
Breakthrough Breast Cancer Research Unit, London, UK	Kantonsspital, St. Gallen, Switzerland	The Christie Hospital, Manchester, UK
Centre Léon Bérard, Lyon, France	Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden	The Institute of Cancer Research, Sutton, London, UK
Charité, Berlin, Germany	Krankenhaus Nordwest Frankfurt, Germany	The Netherlands Cancer Institute, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Medical University of Vienna, Austria	Mainz University Clinic, Mainz, Germany	The Royal Marsden Hospital, London, UK
Daniel den Hoed Cancer Centre, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	Manchester Cancer Research Centre (MCRC), Manchester, UK	Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", Naples, Italy
Department of Oncology, University Hospital, Antwerp, Belgium	Manchester University, Paterson Institute for Cancer Research, Manchester, UK	Universitätsklinik für Innere Medizin, Innsbruck, Austria
St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, UK	Max-Delbrück-Centrum für Molekulare Medizin, Berlin, Germany	University Clinic Heidelberg/Germany, German Cancer Research Centre, Heidelberg, Germany
Erasmus University Medical Center, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	Medical Oncology, University Hospital Policlinico G.B. Rossi, University of Verona Medical School, Verona, Italy	University College London Hospitals, London, UK
European Institute of Oncology, Milan, Italy	National Tumor Institute, Milan, Italy	University Hospital Lausanne CHUV, Lausanne, Switzerland
Fondazione Policlinico Universitario Agostino Gemelli IRCCS, Roma, Italy	Newcastle University & Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals, Newcastle, UK	University Hospital Maastricht, The Netherlands
Free University Hospital, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland (IOSI), Bellinzona, Switzerland	University Hospital of Cologne, Germany
Gustave Roussy, Villejuif, France	Policlinico Monteluce, Perugia, Italy	University Hospital Zurich, Switzerland
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Hopital Pitie Salpetriere, Ile de France, France	Queen Mary University of London, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, London, UK	Alexandra Hospital, University of Athens, Greece
Hospital Clinico Universitario de Valencia, Spain	Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Center, Nijmegen, The Netherlands	University of Athens, Greece
Hospital Universitario "12 de Octubre", Madrid, Spain	Royal Free Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK	University of Glasgow, CRC Department of Medical Oncology, UK
Hospital Universitario Barcelona, Spain	School of Clinical Sciences, Professional Unit of Surgery, City Hospital Nottingham, UK	University of Oxford, UK
Hospital Universitario Madrid, Spain	Southern Sweden Cancer Center, Lund, Sweden	University of Turin, Italy
Imperial Cancer Research, Hammersmith Hospital, London, UK		Vall d'Hebron University Hospital, Barcelona, Spain
Imperial College London, UK		Velindre Cancer Centre, Cardiff, UK
Institut Català d'Oncologia Medical & Hospital Germans Trias i Pujol, Badalona, Spain		

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# **ESMO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME: ENHANCING CAREERS SINCE 1989**



