

Final Report - 14th International Junior Academy – Summer School in Budapest / Hungary from August 8th to 10th.

Introduction: First, I should thankfully explain how I got the opportunity to participate the 14th International Junior Academy – Summer School in Budapest / Hungary from August 8th to 10th. Dr Chamali, one of my colleagues who worked at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo highly recommended the value and importance of participating this conference. With the rising enthusiasm I applied for bursary since the cost is unbearable. I submitted an abstract of a case report; Eosinophilic solid and cystic renal cell carcinoma, a newly described subtype of renal cell carcinoma. I was very delighted when I got the bursary to participate the conference and my abstract was also accepted. The bursary was provided by the German Division of IAP and Vladimir Totovic – Foundation. This was my first experience in participating an international conference away from Sri Lanka.

Main topics: The conference was particularly based on molecular pathology and liquid biopsy in lung cancer, lymph node structure and lymphoma, Breast pathology, Mesenchymal tumours and tumours of the thymus and mediastinum.

Molecular pathology and liquid biopsy in lung cancer: This was an excellent lecture done by Prof Aurelie Fabre. Lung cancer presentation and tumour subtyping according to the 5th edition of WHO blue book were described in a nut shell. Molecular data were also discussed specially with the biomarkers in lung cancer. ALK, ROS1, NTRK and BRAF can be done with immunohistochemistry. Cases with mutations like EGFR, BRAF, Her2 and FGFR3, fusions like ALK, ROS1, RET, NTRK and FGFR2/3 and amplifications like MET and Her2 have therapeutic advantages with specific inhibitors. Immunotherapy is another option with cancers having high PDL-1 expression. Development of antibody drug conjugates has led to new treatment options for non-small cell carcinoma. Liquid biopsies, including the analysis of circulating tumour cells, circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA) and RNA and cell-free DNA (cfDNA) were described well. The non-invasiveness of the procedure, limited barriers and ability to repeat when necessary are the main advantages emphasized in the talk.

Lymph node structure and malignancy: Computer generated normal structure and its deviations were nicely described by Prof Martin-Leo-Hansmann. Advances in digital pathology and artificial intelligence are emerging assistance for pathologists in diagnosing lymphoma. The role of hematopathologists in diagnosis of lymphoma was also emphasized. Morphological differentials of lymphoma were also nicely described in the lecture.

Breast pathology: The two lectures done by Prof Janina Kulka and Dr Magali LACROIX-TRIKI were excellent, covering all the aspects of molecular subtyping of breast cancer and their prognosis and treatment. The biphasic lesions of the breast such as fibroadenoma and phyllodes tumours with their subtypes were described, with molecular aspects. The given examples helped enhance the diagnosing ability.

Diagnosing mesenchymal tumours: This lecture simply described every aspect of mesenchymal tumours with relevant morphological, immunohistochemical and molecular findings. Prof Eva Wardelmann did an excellent work with emphasizing the importance of molecular pathology in diagnosing mesenchymal tumours.

Tumours of the thymus and mediastinum: It was an excellent lecture done by Prof Philipp Strobel covering almost all aspects regarding mediastinal tumours including thymic cysts, thymolipoma, lymphofollicular thymitis, Hodgkin lymphoma, types of thymomas, thymic carcinomas and neuroendocrine tumours. The relation to myasthenia gravis was described. The molecular alterations and prognosis were also explained. NUT carcinoma should be always kept in mind since disregarding it can lead for misdiagnosis.

Outcomes: The lectures on lymphoma, breast pathology, liquid biopsies, mesenchymal tumours and mediastinal tumours covered a vast area with morphological, immunohistochemical and molecular aspects along with their prognosis and treatment modalities. Many discussions regarding targeted therapy and immunotherapy were held. As described above those excellent lectures helped me alot to improve my knowledge and facts about novel immunohistochemical and molecular techniques. So, it was a great opportunity I got to share the knowledge I gained with my other Sri Lankan colleagues.

The other opportunity I got due the conference was to meet pathologists and histopathology trainees from different countries including Germany, Algeria, France, Morocco, United Kingdom, Ukraine and Ireland. I could share their experiences and explore their advances in pathology in their countries.

We had many relaxed discussions and we got an insight about the cultural differences because colleagues from different countries had different ideas and different preferences.

This was my first visit to Budapest, Hungary. The main difficulty I faced was the language discrepancy. The Hungarian people hardly use English. Communication became a very difficult and different experience. The Budapest public transport system is very fascinating and

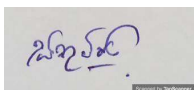
excellent. Anyhow, I was able to adapt it during that short stay. Clean environment and roads and happy people without tension were inspiring. A guided city tour was also included into the three days conference which gave a novel experience and a background understanding of Budapest, Hungary. I personally visited the hero square, the beautiful city park near the hero square and the Magyar Mezogazdasagi museum getting unforgettable experience.

Conclusion: Participating the 14th International Junior Academy – Summer School in Budapest / Hungary from August 8th to 10th was a memorable experience I got to enhance my interest and knowledge in Pathology along with the experience in working with international pathologists and pathology trainees. I got the opportunity to do an oral presentation in an international conference, on one of my case reports. Exploring a new environment with the exposure to a different culture was an extra advantage I got to understand my capabilities. The beautiful Budapest with happy and relaxed people attracted me to this lovely country.

I thankfully remind Dr Chamali who encouraged me and guided me to participate this great event.

I would like to express my heartiest gratitude to Ms Martina Schmidt, Managing Director, International Academy of Pathology, German Division for giving me this valuable opportunity. I would highly appreciate her friendly smile, guidance and support to every participant throughout the conference. Her leadership qualities and dedication were highlighted throughout the event carrying the event to a success.

Finally, I would also express my heartiest thankfulness to Vladmir Totovic – Foundation to support me by giving free registration for the event, two nights' accommodation at Radisson Hotel Beke and travel grants. Otherwise, it would not have become a reality to attend the 14th International Junior Academy Conference.



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