



# SCHOOL

## Mobility grant report

**Period of visit:** 26 October – 2 November 2019

**Location:** Leiden University Medical Center, Leiden, The Netherlands

During 2019 we were selected to be awarded a European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) mobility grant. This grant enabled us to visit Leiden University Medical Center in The Netherlands for a week at the end of October last year.

During this week our main purpose was to gain familiarity with the active breathing coordinator (ABC) technique, which is used to treat left-side breast cancer patients. This technique is to be implemented in our department in the near future. The secondary objective of our visit was to acquire information on stereotactic treatments, which we also hope to introduce to our department soon.

The staff of the medical centre were very welcoming. Our programme consisted of both clinical hours and meetings with medical physicists, technicians and radiotherapists.

We were able to observe the patient ABC preparation process from the CT scan onwards. Observation of the set-up of the device, the instructions given to the patient and the way in which the staff explained the steps was really helpful to us. The patient can find their first experience with the ABC device intimidating, so for us, observation of the radiotherapists' handling of the situation was important.

Moving to the linear accelerator, we were able to see both patients who were experienced with the procedure (i.e. late into their treatment) as well as patients in their first treatments. This presented us with the challenges and variety of possible difficulties we would be likely to face during daily practice.

During our clinical time with the CT and linear accelerator, we also became acquainted with stereotactic treatments, especially those used for the brain and lung. This was interesting in many aspects. We were able to see all the steps involved in the procedures, from positioning and immobilisation of the patient to the image guidance protocols (for example, the four-dimensional cone beam computed tomography (4DCBCT) system and the intra-fraction verification of the target position) Another highlight was the observation of the stereotactic treatments with the use of the 6D linac table.

During our time in the Leiden department we met some interesting people in the field. We took part in group meetings with physicists and radiotherapy specialists who gave us really helpful and interesting information from their respective fields. We were able to obtain a full understanding of the department's workflow, from the stereotactic protocols explained by a radiotherapy specialist to treatment planning guidance discussed with a dosimetrist.

Especially useful for us was a presentation of the management and organisation protocols that were followed in the department. With the patient always at the centre of attention, the department showed us ways to improve both the workflow as well as the patients' experiences during a challenging period of their treatment.

Overall, this programme was a marvellous learning experience for us. We returned to our institute with enough tools to start the ABC technique to treat left-side breast cancer patients. On a personal level, this transfer of knowledge helped us to broaden our horizons and we would recommend such a travel opportunity to any professional interested in expanding their knowledge in the field of radiotherapy.



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