



Report of the short-term visit ERN Exchange Programme 2021-2022 ERN ReCONNET

Name of the participant	Dr. Emanuele Gotelli
Healthcare provider where the participant is employed	Prof. Dr. Maurizio Cutolo
Name of the Healthcare provider and Head of the Unit hosting the exchange visit Address Name of the Head of the Unit	Name of the HCPs: Prof. Dr. Vanessa Smith Address: Corneel Heymanslaan 10, 9000 Gent, Belgium Name of the Head of the Unit: Prof. Dr. Dirk Elewaut
Start date of the exchange visit	9th January 2023
End date of the exchange visit	20th January 2023

- 1. Please introduce your position/employment (MD, HAP, patient, other) and years of practice of your profession:** PhD Student in "Clinical and Experimental Immunology" (Cycle XXXVI – University of Genova – Italy) and Rheumatologist since November 2020.
- 2. The objectives of the exchange visit were:** Technical sharing and update of imaging methods for the optimization of microcirculation analysis in course of rare and complex connective tissue diseases to improve their early diagnosis and management.
- 3. Please describe the activities performed during your exchange visit:** During the exchange visit, I was involved in the analysis of the microcirculation of patients suffering from systemic sclerosis (SSc) and overlap forms of SSc-inflammatory myopathies, through the use of periungual nailfold videocapillaroscopy (NVC) and laser speckled contrast analysis (LASCA). Furthermore, I became familiar with techniques for the measurement of skin hardness (skin ultrasound and durometry) in the early phase of SSc. Finally, I was involved in the clinical visits and in the therapeutic management of SSc patients, also within a multidisciplinary evaluation with Cardiologists and Radiologists.
- 4. Please describe below what you have learned and which new information/novelty you got during the exchange visit:**

During the exchange visit I learned to simultaneously use techniques for microcirculation analysis (NVC and LASCA) and measurement of skin thickness (skin ultrasound, durometry) in both patients



with SSc and healthy subjects to investigate vascular and cutaneous involvement of SSc. In particular, it was the first time I used a durometer.

5. Please describe below how you plan to implement what you have learned in your Healthcare provider/clinic/practice:

I will increasingly integrate the use of the tools mentioned above into the clinical evaluation of patients with SSC, in particular for the early diagnosis of this progressive and potentially untreatable rare disease. It will also be useful to use these techniques in patients with already clinically manifest disease, to evaluate correlation with organ involvement (with special regard to interstitial lung disease).

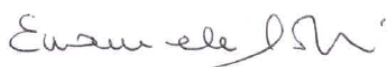
6. Would you visit in the future the same center or another ERN centre for update/new topics?

It would be a pleasure for me to attend the same Center again as well as another Center of the network, in order to learn about further approaches to the patients with rare connective tissue diseases, in particular SSc.

7. Would you recommend the Exchange Programme to your colleagues? If yes, why?

Yes, I would recommend participation in the Exchange Programme to colleagues interested in rare connective tissue diseases. My experience at Prof. Dr. Vanessa Smith's Scleroderma Unit in Gent was totally positive and I recommend the attendance to all colleagues interested in the topic of SSc (early diagnosis, therapeutic management, multidisciplinary care).

Best regards,



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