

## IHS Headache Trainee report 2020

Yessika Milena Rojas Villegas, Colombia



São Paulo Headache Center, São Paulo, Brazil

Mentor: Mario Peres

First of all, I would like to thank IHS for giving me this amazing opportunity to use this grant and be able to perform this training even in the midst of the pandemic. I would like to thank to Dr Mario Peres, Dra Thaiza Lima, Dra Vanda Lelis de Souza, Dr Juliane Peres, Dr Marcio Nattan, Dra Ida Fortini, Dr Gabriel Kubota, Dr Caio Grava, and all the people I interacted with during my staying in São Paulo for almost 5 months.

I would like to mention two parts of my fellowship programme, the clinical and the academic-scientific. São Paulo is a place with a population that is very similar to Colombia from the social, cultural and economic point of view, and both of them have very similar health systems.

I had the opportunity to be present during patient care in the public system and the private system with the challenges that each system has. In the private system, for most of the time I was observing consultations with Dr Mario in the “São Paulo Headache Center” and the “Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein”. I was able to learn the clinical approach and performance of specialised consultation in headache, and the most important part was that Dr Mario shared with me his experiences and we discussed a lot of difficult clinical cases with an excellent approach to the comorbidities and newest treatments such as monoclonal antibodies. I was able to observe ablative techniques performed by specialised

anaesthesiology such as radiofrequency ablation for refractory trigeminal neuralgia and ultrasound-guided blocks for posterior neck pain. One of the objectives I had when I applied for the scholarship was to understand how an expert treats refractory headaches and how to provide adequate long-term care for these patients, and this is one of the many lessons I've learned from Dr Mario.

In the public system I was able to attend the outpatient headache consultation in the "Hospital das Clínicas" Fellow Program of the "São Paulo University". I met a team of professionals who are developing multidisciplinary work in headache. It was a great experience to understand techniques such as acupuncture, puncture with dry needle, TENS, and another orofacial pain treatments. I was able to interact with allied specialties such as odontology, neuro-ophthalmology and neurosurgery with a very important approach on secondary headaches. I also observed the anxiety outpatient consultation in the Psychiatric institute of the "Hospital das Clínicas".

In the second part of the fellowship I understood how a research team is articulated, regardless of geographic or even language barriers. Dr Mario was very helpful and made me feel more comfortable every day, and he included me in two projects that we are still working on now. I was able to be present at research meetings online with people from Asia, Europe and the United States; these meetings happened virtually because of the pandemic. I was also present at academic meetings of the "Hospital das Clínicas" every week reviewing fundamental issues in headache.

During the fellowship I was very interested to understand better how to choose patients for each type of treatment, and specifically for monoclonal antibodies, in a health system similar to the one we have in Colombia, because at that time they were not being used in our country. We started a retrospective and prospective observational study that included patients who were treated consecutively with monoclonal antibodies in the São Paulo Headache Center. We wanted to know the local conditions of access to medications, the patients' comorbidities, another medications used for patients during the treatment in real life, adherence to treatment, and results after follow-up. Carrying out the research preparation directly with Dr Mario and understanding essential details about the instruments used and the methodology have been very challenging, however Dr Mario has given me the necessary support to carry out the scientific work.

Visiting São Paulo Headache Center, Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein, Fellow Program Hospital das Clínicas and Psychiatric Institute of the Hospital das Clínicas has met all my

initial aims. I think that in Latin America there is still the concept of individual work, and a new way of creating remote teams is being born thanks to the networks that are being facilitated by virtuality. Understanding how countries like Brazil have developed the field of headache even with complex health systems made me think about new possibilities to continue the work locally and regionally. I believe that connecting people at a regional level is a way to strengthen team work so together we can improve our approach to headache. The training has given me a way to improve my knowledge, clinical skills and research skills, and I began to perceive things from another point of view.

This training helped me to grow as a professional and to start thinking more about the possible opportunities for the development of projects at a local level, not only in public practice but also in private practice. Now I continue to work with my mentor Dr Mario in the field of research and I understand the need we have in our countries, which is to improve our local information, and the impact this may have on patients.

Thanks to the chairs of the Electronic Media Committee, Dr Anna Andreou and Dr Arão Oliveira, now I'm a part of the committee, and this will also be a challenge for continuous learning.

Thanks to this training, I am part of the Headache Group of the Colombian Neurology Society and from my home town, Manizales in Colombia, I hope to continue contributing to the collective work that is so important in Latin America. I hope that more people in our region have opportunities like this and when they return to their countries they can contribute with their lessons learned as I intend to do.

Finally I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Carol Taylor and Henrik Winther Schytz for all their help in this process, for their understanding with the differences in language and for their professionalism. I would especially like to thank Dr Mario Peres for his unfailing support during my stay in São Paulo, for the support given in times of pandemic, for including me in all his activities, and his long explanations from his knowledge and the vast experience he has. Finally, I am so grateful to IHS; I truly appreciate everyone's efforts and commitments they have to improve access to information and access to this type of training that certainly has an impact in our countries.



Private practice with Dr. Mario Peres and Dr. Thaiza Lima



Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein hospitalization and procedures in headache



Allied specialties, dentistry Dr. Vanda Lelis teaching me



Exhibition of paintings done by patients "Aura in Migraine" ABRACES - Brazilian Association of Cluster Headache and Migraine



Team Fellow Headache “Hospital de las Clínicas”, São Paulo University

Outpatient consult public health system



Virtual meetings during the COVID - 19 pandemic