

IHS Short-stay Scholarship reports 2025

Ketevan Tsikhiseli – Georgia



Institution: Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany

Mentor - Bianca Raffaelli

January to February 2026

My name is Ketevan Tsikhiseli. I am a general Neurologist from Tbilisi, Georgia. Throughout my career as a resident in Neurology, I have become very interested in the field of Headache Medicine, particularly in Migraine, and also now as a licensed Doctor, I find this subspecialty fascinating and my interest has only been continuing to grow more. That was one of the main reasons why I have applied for the short-term scholarship of the International Headache Society. It was the greatest privilege to have been selected as one of the recipients of the IHS Short-Term Scholarship 2025.

During my 6 weeks of fellowship I was working under the supervision of Prof. Bianca Raffaelli at the Headache Center of Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin. From the beginning she welcomed me with hospitality and introduced me to her team, who were all very friendly and have quickly accepted me as one of their team members. They all created a supportive environment and each of the team members were keen on sharing their knowledge that helped me to engage in the new setting quickly, which at the end made my visit at the Charité Hospital very enjoyable and delightful.

In the Headache Center I had the opportunity to be involved in the consultations of patients who suffered from different types of headache disorders. Daily a lot of new patients have visited the clinic and I was able to observe how the doctors were taking the history, doing physical examinations and managing the chief complaints of the patients accordingly. I was also able to take part in the follow-up consultations and see the difference between the approaches of the first and repeated appointments.

Most common type of headache disorder that patients were diagnosed with was migraine. I was able to witness how patients were treated with not only triptans and monoclonal antibodies, but also with a new class of drugs, for example gepants (Rimegepant, Autogepant) that unfortunately are not still available in Georgia. During the consultations I had an opportunity to see how the doctors take their time to explain the details about the migraine to every patient, how enthusiastically they answered the questions with non-medical and understandable words for the patients, how such a big role the headache diaries plays and how the medication dosage charts available at the Headache Center of Charité help the doctors to provide detailed information to the patients about correctly taking the medication and the duration of the specific treatment.

In case of preventive treatment of chronic migraine a lot of patients were treated with Botox injections. I was taking part in doing the procedure under the supervision of the team members and I had the hands-on experience on doing the injections myself and gained the knowledge about the precise sites for the injections and the accurate dosage for each of the sites. I will be forever grateful for trusting me and giving me the opportunity to do Botox injections myself.

Besides gaining the knowledge about the pharmacological treatment of migraine, I also had an opportunity to learn about „Tagesklinik“, that is a multidisciplinary approach for episodic and chronic migraine led by neurologists, psychotherapists and physiotherapists. This is a one-week program for five patients, who suffer from chronic migraine. „Tagesklinik“ starts from the mornings with lectures about the history, pathophysiology and treatment of migraine. In the afternoons the program also includes non-medical management of headache with relaxation methods, breathing techniques and group therapies with discussing the problems together and giving the recommendations to each other. The last part of „Tagesklinik“ was physiotherapy intervention, that was done by the rehabilitation physician, who guided the patients with manual therapy to reduce tension in the neck and shoulder muscles and to decrease trigger points.

I also had an opportunity of participating in many type of research studies, that have been conducted during my visit. I witnessed interesting studies, for example how the speed of the flow of the blood in the temporal arteries and in the capillaries of the skin has been changing after injection of CGRP molecule in women, who suffered from menstrual migraine. Another research that is currently still ongoing at Charité Headache Center is double-blind study that compares Botox therapy with placebo medication in patients with chronic migraine. The experience in the research team helped me to gain insight in data collection, in interpreting the results of the study and correctly identifying the patients for the specific study.

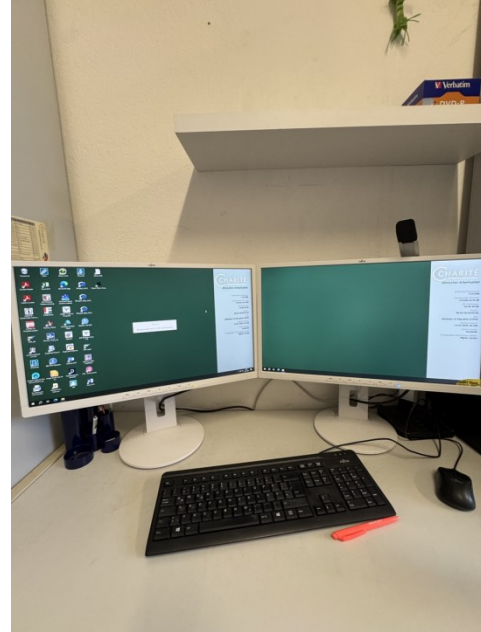
Every Tuesday morning I also participated in case discussions, that begins with the interpretation of rare and interesting cases of the patients at Charité Hospital followed by review of the literature and ending with management of the specific disease with newer treatment options and modern approaches. During these meetings I have gained knowledge about the challenging diseases and also about the ongoing researches of these disorders.

In addition of having the experience at the outpatient Charité Headache Center, with the support of Prof. Bianca Raffaelli I was able to do rotation at the stationary unit at the Charité Hospital in the department of Neurology for two weeks. The mornings begin with discussing the radiological images of the patients with the radiologists, later followed by doing visiting rounds of patients with the team, examining the new patients and discussing the medical treatment and future management of each of the patients. I was able to participate daily in examining a lot of patients with different types of disorders, seeing the laboratory results and the imaging studies of the patients and witnessing the improvement of the general condition of the patients after appropriate treatment plan. I also had an opportunity to attend intra-arterial lidocaine infusion via the middle meningeal artery in woman, who suffered from the refractory migraine. I have witnessed this procedure for the first time, which was very exhilarating for me to attend and also to notice its benefit by effectively and immediately reducing the intensity of the headache in the patient.

In the end I would like to say that I am deeply grateful for Prof. Bianca Raffaelli and her team members for contributing in my career development. During these 6 weeks I have gained a lot of experience in not only outpatient settings, but also in stationary clinic. My knowledge has greatly increased in the field of headache medicine and in research studies. I have already started implementing and sharing my gained experience in my home country and integrating both medical

and non-medical treatment options for the patients who suffer with different types of headache disorders with the main goal of improving their quality of life.

Charité Headache Center



Clinical Research at the Charité Headache Center



Charité Hospital



Radiological Conference

Ketevan Paposvili – Georgia



Institution: Danish Headache Center, Rigshospitalet, Glostrup, Denmark

Mentor – Messoud Ashina

April to June 2026

I had the great privilege of spending several weeks at the Danish Headache Center as part of the International Headache Society Short-Stay Scholarship Programme. This experience was one of the most enriching and inspiring professional opportunities I have had so far, and I am deeply grateful to the International Headache Society and to the Danish Headache Center for making it possible.

I chose the Danish Headache Center because of its outstanding international reputation in headache medicine. For years, many of the scientific papers and studies I had read in this field came from this center, and I had great respect for the work of Professor Messoud Ashina and the entire team even before my visit. Therefore, when I received the scholarship, I felt extremely happy, fortunate, and thankful, but also aware of the responsibility that came with such an opportunity.

From the very beginning, the communication and support I received were excellent. My first interactions with Professor Messoud Ashina and Kateryna Kolkova were very helpful and welcoming, and they made the process smooth from the start. When I arrived at the Danish Headache Center, my onsite experience began with a very warm welcome from the department. The team had gathered to greet me, and from the first day I could already feel the special atmosphere of the center: professional, respectful, collaborative, and genuinely supportive. Professor Ashina had just returned from China and shared some of his experiences with the group, and even in those first moments I could clearly see the deep respect and admiration the team had for him.

During my stay, I had the extraordinary feeling of seeing in real life many things that I had previously only read about in scientific articles. The Danish Headache Center is truly a remarkable environment for anyone passionate about headache medicine. Each day brought something new: clinical observations, research activities, academic discussions, lectures, meetings, and informal exchanges with colleagues. No two days were the same, and every day I learned something valuable.

I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Janu Thuraiayah, who guided me throughout my stay and shared important literature and resources that helped me become more familiar with the field. Her support was extremely valuable, and it helped me better understand both the research and clinical aspects of headache medicine.

On the clinical side, I had the opportunity to join consultations with Professor Rigmor H. Jensen, an outstanding professor and a wonderful person. Since the Danish Headache Center is a tertiary referral center, many of the patients were highly complex. Observing these consultations was both fascinating and challenging. It helped me understand more deeply what it means to work at the highest level of specialized care, where patients often come after many previous attempts at diagnosis and treatment. In such a setting, the physician carries a great responsibility, and it requires profound knowledge, experience, patience, and empathy to help patients who have not yet found sufficient relief.

One aspect that impressed me very much was the amount of time dedicated to each patient. Some consultations lasted one and a half hours or even longer, which allowed the physician to collect a detailed history, perform a careful examination, understand the patient's full journey, and discuss their questions and concerns properly. For me, this was very meaningful to observe, because it showed how much value is placed not only on diagnosis and treatment, but also on listening carefully to the patient.

I was also very grateful that almost everyone, including many patients, spoke English very well. During both clinical consultations and research-related visits, the team and the patients were kind enough to conduct or explain the discussions in English whenever possible. This made my learning experience much richer and allowed me to be actively involved and to benefit as much as possible from every activity.

Beyond the clinical and scientific experience, the scholarship also gave me the opportunity to learn more about the Danish healthcare system. I found it very interesting to compare the Danish and Georgian systems, including differences in medical education, residency training, clinical practice, organization of care, and the everyday life of doctors and patients. Staying in Denmark also gave me a glimpse into a different culture and way of living, which was personally enriching as well. In addition, I had the chance to meet medical professionals from other countries, hear about their experiences, and exchange perspectives with them, which made the stay even more valuable.

The Danish Headache Center regularly hosted lectures, meetings, and academic activities with professionals from Denmark and abroad, and I was kindly included in these opportunities. I appreciated this very much, because it allowed me to see not only the clinical work of the center, but also its strong scientific and educational environment. Everyone I met was generous in sharing knowledge, experience, and advice, and even small conversations became important learning moments for me.

At the end of my stay, I was very happy to give a presentation titled "Georgia: Medicine, Neurology and Headache Care." This gave me the opportunity to share information about my country, our medical system, neurology care, and headache care in Georgia. I was grateful to have the chance to present these topics and to exchange perspectives with the team. I believe that this type of international exchange is very important and can be beneficial for both sides. It allows us not only to learn from leading centers, but also to reflect on our own systems and consider how we can improve care in our own countries. Looking back, this experience was much more than a clinical observership. It was professionally inspiring, academically valuable, and personally meaningful. It showed me how a highly specialized center can combine excellent patient care, research, education, teamwork, and kindness. It also reminded me how much international collaboration can help young neurologists grow and bring new ideas back to their home countries.

I sincerely hope that I will be able to apply the knowledge, experience, and inspiration I gained at the Danish Headache Center to headache care in Georgia. I also hope to share what I learned with my Georgian colleagues and contribute, even in small steps, to improving awareness, education, and care for patients with headache disorders in my country.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the International Headache Society for this wonderful scholarship opportunity. I am also profoundly thankful to Professor Messoud Ashina, Professor Rigmor H. Jensen, Dr. Janu Thuraiiyah, and the entire Danish Headache Center team for their warm welcome, guidance, generosity, and support. I truly enjoyed every moment of my stay and learned a tremendous amount.

For anyone passionate about headache medicine, the Danish Headache Center is a dream environment for learning and development. I will always remember this experience with great gratitude.

Carolina Oldoni – Brazil



Institution: Kings' College London, UK

Mentor – Peter Goadsby

April to May 2026

I spent just over five weeks with the Headache Team at King's College Hospital, under the supervision of Prof. Peter Goadsby, between April and May of this year. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have had such a remarkable experience. My sincere thanks go to the IHS for their support, and above all to Prof. Goadsby and his wonderful team for welcoming me so warmly.

My main goal during those weeks was primarily research-oriented - to understand how things work within such a well-organized team and to bring that operational knowledge back to Brazil. That goal was fully achieved. I was able to follow and even participate in research-related activities throughout my time there. The clinical sessions were equally enriching, particularly the opportunity to observe and listen to case discussions with Prof. Goadsby.

I return home with invaluable knowledge and a heart full of gratitude for this outstanding opportunity.



Freda Dodd Glover



Institution: Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital / Kings' College London, UK

Mentor – Anna Andreou

May to June 2026

My short-stay headache “observership” at the Headache Centre within the Pain Management Unit (INPUT) at St Thomas' Hospital was a rewarding and inspiring experience. Under the mentorship of Dr. Anna Andreou, I had the privilege of observing a highly specialised, multidisciplinary approach to the assessment and management of complex headache disorders. The “observership” provided afforded me the opportunity to see frequent botox injections for migraine and trigeminal neuralgia as well as Greater Occipital Nerve Blocks and Multiple Cranial nerve blocks (GONB).

I was also privileged to observe the clinical practice of Dr. Giorgio Lambru at St Thomas' Hospital and Dr. Shazia Afridi at Guy's Hospital. The experience broadened my clinical perspective and reinforced the importance of individualised treatment strategies, multidisciplinary collaboration, and compassionate patient care. I had the experience to collaborate on a research paper on real-world experience and outcomes of GONB in migraine patients with the team.

A particularly memorable aspect of the observership was the opportunity to spend time with the outstanding headache nursing team. I was warmly welcomed by Madeline, Beth, Laura, Gilda, Priscilla, Sarah, and Juliana, whose expertise, professionalism, and dedication to patients were evident in every interaction. Their role in patient education, treatment delivery, follow-up care, and service coordination highlighted the indispensable contribution of specialist nurses to a successful headache service.

The knowledge, skills, and perspectives gained during this experience will undoubtedly strengthen my clinical practice and support ongoing efforts to improve headache care, education, and research in Ghana and across Africa. Greater occipital nerve blocks are a relatively cheaper alternative to more expensive parenteral migraine prophylaxis. I desire to make this readily available to my patients and to continue teaching healthcare professionals especially in primary care to use the intervention to provide relief for acute headaches and as an alternative bridging therapy in cluster headaches and chronic migraine prevention.

Beyond the clinical learning, the observership offered an environment of generosity, mentorship, and collaboration. The willingness of the consultants, nurses, and wider multidisciplinary team to share their knowledge and experience created a truly enriching educational experience.

I leave this observership deeply grateful to Dr. Anna Andreou, Dr. Giorgio Lambru, Dr. Shazia Afridi, and the entire headache team at St Thomas' and Guy's Hospitals for their warm hospitality and commitment to advancing headache care.



