

My observership in the Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery in Miller School of Medicine in Miami

Agata Kłosowicz

Department of Dermatology in the University Hospital in Cracow

I chose to undertake my three-month fellowship at the Miller School in Miami, Florida because of my particular interest in scalp disorders. In my doctoral thesis, I planned to analyze whether dendritic cells might serve as predictive markers of responsiveness to hydroxychloroquine treatment in primary cicatricial alopecia patients. This hypothesis was based on two assumptions. Firstly, in scarring alopecia, hair follicles are the key target of autoaggressive immunity mediated by dendritic cells. Secondly, antimalarial drugs limit dendritic cell activation by blocking Toll-like receptor signalling and might constitute the biological target of hydroxychloroquine treatment. This project was awarded an ETIUDA scholarship, granted by the Polish National Science Center for the best doctoral dissertations. Within the ETIUDA framework, I was obliged to undertake a fellowship for at least 3 months in any scientific centre in the world. As in my thesis, I was studying hair disorders, I was privileged to be accepted by one of the most renowned dermatologists in this field — Prof. Antonella Tosti, MD. Not only has Prof. Tosti published more than 800 articles, cited more than 14 000 times, but she is also a pioneer in employing novel imaging techniques such as confocal reflectance microscopy as a non-invasive method in diagnosing different types of hair loss. At the University of Miami, I had the wonderful opportunity to take part in the Graduate Education Specialty Training Program (G.E.S.T.) for international fellows, which received the award of excellence in education by the American Academy of Dermatology. During my observership, I participated in the General Dermatology, Dermatopathology and Hair and Nails programs.

In Prof. Tosti Clinic I had a great opportunity to study different treatment algorithms regarding both scarring and non-scarring types of alopecia. In her everyday practice, Prof. Tosti uses novel techniques of skin imaging as well as mobile devices such as handyscope and folliscope. To achieve better effects, I was taught to combine topical and systemic treatment with other procedures such as platelet-rich

plasma and laser devices (for example Capillus Laser Cap). Prof. Tosti often prefers polytherapy with oral minoxidil, not only in androgenic alopecia but also in cicatricial alopecia patients. The starting dose is usually a quarter of a 2,5 mg pill. In alopecia areata, she demonstrated a good clinical response to JAK inhibitors used both orally and topically. The number of clinical trials conducted in her clinic was impressive. In the course of my fellowship, we published two papers: a case report on the association of facial papules and rosacea (Kłosowicz A, Thompson C, Tosti A, Erythematous papules involving the eyebrows in a patient with a history of rosacea and hair loss, *Skin Appendage Disord.*, 2020, online article) and an original paper on the diascopy of scalp vessels (Kłosowicz A., Alsalhi W, Tosti A, How to optimize trichoscopy for evaluation of scalp vessels, *Skin Appendage Disord.*, 2020, online article).

I was amazed that resident physicians of the Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery had an enormous knowledge of dermatopathology. During my stay in Miami, I learned that they held special weekly meetings to discuss specific findings in microscopic images of various group of diseases. Moreover, they were regularly asked to describe numerous clinicopathological correlations (CPC). I was so eager to study pathology that every afternoon I attended Prof. Paolo Romanelli's clinic, where we read and discussed the slides. Prof. Romanelli was another important figure during my stay in Miami. He was my mentor who kept questioning me about patients' conditions involving their immunology and of course histopathological features. At first, I knew the correct answer to less than 10% of all the questions but every week studied "Dermatopathology" by Elston et al. and finally made some improvements. Thanks to Prof. Romanelli, I understood that there is no dermatology without dermatopathology. The microscopic features of the diseases might not only help in establishing the proper diagnosis but also in implementing the correct treatment.

Adres do korespondencji:

Agata Kłosowicz, MD, Department of Dermatology in the University Hospital in Cracow, Kopernika, 31–501 Kraków, Poland
e-mail: agata.klosowicz@viamedica.pl



Figure 1. Residents and fellows in the course of dermatopathology classes with Prof. Paolo Romanelli

As to the work schedule, I was surprised to notice that all resident physicians and international fellows were invited to a wide variety of lectures every day during the lunch break (12–1 pm). Every Monday, we had pathology classes with Assistant Professors, on Tuesdays we discussed clinico-pathological correlations, and on Thursdays and Fridays the residents reviewed and helped each other memorize rare dermatological diseases. Wednesdays were the most interesting days because of the Management Conferences. Every week, Prof. Kirsner — the Head of the Department — invited a special guest, usually a famous scientist or clinician, to give his lecture and to take a lead of the conference. The Management Conference was divided into three parts. In the morning, residents and assistants went to the clinics to see the invited patients presenting interesting skin conditions. We were not allowed to ask any questions to the patients and our only task was to observe and describe skin lesions. Afterwards, in the lecture room, we were asked to



Figure 2. A weekend road trip from Miami to Key West, one of the best drives in the United States



Figure 3. I was exploring financial district called Brickell on the scooter, a very convenient way of travelling

give precise descriptions of the lesions and propose differential diagnoses. Finally, a physician who was taking care of the patient presented his history and the proper diagnosis. Assistant professors, as well as the residents, discussed the best management for the patient.

I could not have imagined a better place to undertake my fellowship than the Miller School of Medicine in Miami, Florida. I learned a lot, made new friends, took part in conferences and enjoyed beautiful weather and palm trees. I am very happy to go back to the United States when the pandemic is over to start my new research fellowship in Boston.