

ECNP RESEARCH INTERNSHIP 2019

1st – 15th December 2019

Host: Prof. Stefan Leucht, Dept. of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Klinikum rechts der Isar, Technische Universität München, Munich, Germany

It is my pleasure to write a short report about the ECNP Internship Programme at the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Section of Evidence Based Medicine, where I spent two weeks learning from experts in the field of meta-analysis and systematic reviews.

During the two weeks I spent, I learned a great deal about the whole process of planning a meta-analysis, doing a literature search, selecting the appropriate studies, extracting data, data analysis and finally, writing the paper.

The first day, I was warmly greeted by prof. Leucht who introduced me to his team of junior scientists who work in a “dry lab”, which is where I spent the following two weeks. The junior scientists – Spyridon Sifis, Johannes Schneider, Irene Bighelli and Alessandro Rodolico were very responsive and reachable for any queries I had about the process of doing a meta-analysis. I was given assignments which promptly introduced me to the basic concepts of data extraction and I was taught how workload organization was distributed between the team members. Throughout the two weeks, I also learned the basics of R, which is used routinely in prof. Leucht’s working group. I would say that the most valuable thing I have learned during my stay was seeing the process from beginning to end in a practical setting. Even though there are available resources on meta-analyses development online, seeing a serious, dedicated team work on a paper in person is an invaluable experience. The working atmosphere was very welcoming and I felt right at home despite being there for only two weeks.

Furthermore, I was given a brief tour of the psychiatry and psychotherapy department at the Klinikum rechts der Isar by prof. Leucht. It was very interesting for me to see a developed psychiatry department which put a lot of emphasis on social rehabilitation of the patients and provided a chance for the patients to be quite involved in their recovery. I was allowed to attend clinical lectures that are held by different lecturers every week meant for the residents and specialists which were also very useful.

Prof. Leucht and his team were more than willing to inform me on the current projects that they were working on and were giving me suggestions on how to improve my own research. Even though I had many questions about various topics, they were always patient and accessible. We were brainstorming on potential future research projects which will hopefully come to fruition once the ideas are more crystalized.

All in all, my stay in Munich was a wonderful and memorable experience. The learnings I was able to attain are going to be useful for my future research work and I will do my best to apply and disseminate the knowledge to my colleagues. Considering the lack of funding in Serbia, knowing how to conduct meta-analyses and to organize research teams that can analyze and gather data is a great opportunity.

I would hereby want to thank prof. Leucht and his team of researchers – especially Spyridon who spent a great deal of time helping me learn for the hospitality. I would also want to thank ECNP for providing

me, and other young researchers with the chance to spend time at state of the art institutions and learn from esteemed experts in the field.

Ivan Ristić