



EBJIS TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIP REPORT 2024

The **EBJIS Travelling Fellowship 2024** offered a remarkable journey through some of Europe's most prestigious medical centers dedicated to the diagnosis, treatment, and research of musculoskeletal infections. Over the course of this program, we were immersed in clinical routines, multidisciplinary discussions, and state-of-the-art surgical strategies in three outstanding institutions—each embedded in a city of historic and scientific relevance. After the 42nd Annual Meeting of the EBJIS in Barcelona, Spain, our journey began.

1. Barcelona, Spain.



Clínica Barcelona Universitat de Barcelona.

Host: Prof. Dr. Alex Soriano - Head of Infectious Diseases Service.

Barcelona, a city internationally recognized for its architectural beauty and innovation, served as the first stop. Clínica Barcelona stands at the forefront of infectious disease management in Southern Europe. There we had the privilege of learning from our local host, Alex Soriano, and the exceptional knee and hip team at the Orthopedics Clinic, University Hospital of Barcelona, including Marta Sabater, Ernesto Munoz, Laura Morata, and Juan Carlos Martinez.

The institution is renowned for its integrated multidisciplinary team. With a strong emphasis on antimicrobial stewardship and individualized therapy, the center implements advanced practices such as chronic suppressive therapy (CST).

During our visit, we also had the opportunity to participate in a septic revision surgery and subsequently engaged in an in-depth discussion on preoperative antibiotic



prophylaxis—reflecting the center’s strong commitment to evidence-based perioperative infection control.





2. Leuven, Belgium

University Hospitals Leuven (UZ Leuven)



Host: Prof. Dr. Willem-Jan Metsemakers – Head of Department Traumatology

Nestled in the academic heart of Belgium, Leuven is home to KU Leuven, one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Europe, consistently ranked among the top 50 globally. The city lies approximately 30 kilometers east of Brussels, the nation's capital. UZ Leuven, the university's affiliated hospital, is one of Europe's leading referral centers for trauma care and musculoskeletal infections. The hospital and university together form a renowned hub for clinical innovation, medical education, and translational research. In addition to its academic stature, Leuven is admired for its welcoming atmosphere, charming Gothic architecture, and dynamic role as a center of medical and technological advancement in Belgium.

At the helm of the Traumatology Department is Prof. Dr. Willem-Jan Metsemakers, a globally recognized figure in fracture-related infection (FRI) research. The service is known for pioneering work in phage therapy and surgical innovation. We had the opportunity to take part in regular interdisciplinary rounds, outpatient clinics (we met patients undergoing phage therapy) and major surgeries (Masquelet technique, FRI treatment and navigation surgery). The hospital's close collaboration between orthopedic and infectious disease teams, coupled with cutting-edge laboratory and imaging technology, positions it as a continental benchmark for FRI care, contributing actively to international clinical guidelines and multicenter trials.







3. Vienna, Austria.



MEDICAL UNIVERSITY
OF VIENNA



Medical University of Vienna

Host: Priv. Doz. DDr. Irene K. Sigmund – Orthopaedic Surgeon at Medical University of Vienna

Vienna, the capital of Austria, is not only a cultural and historical landmark but also a medical powerhouse. The Medical University of Vienna is among Europe's oldest and most esteemed medical institutions, with a longstanding tradition of innovation in pathology, microbiology, and surgery.

Dr. Irene K. Sigmund is internationally acknowledged for her work in complex revision arthroplasties and chronic osteomyelitis. She serves as board manager of the Orthopaedic Infection Board (MDT), and leads the Orthopaedic Research Infection Cluster. The unit is also distinguished by its close collaboration with Prof. Dr. Heinz Thalhammer, a leading expert in infectious diseases. Importantly, the service emphasizes advanced histopathological diagnostics, under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Sulzbacher, utilizing a comprehensive range of staining techniques and cellular analyses to differentiate between infection, wear-induced changes, and immunological reactions. We were able to take part in complex surgical approaches (revision arthroplasty and chronic osteomyelitis), attended an interesting seminar with several important topics on musculoskeletal infections and were able to present our services to our hosts.







Participating in the EBJIS Travelling Fellowship 2024 was a professionally enriching experience, reinforcing a commitment to advancing musculoskeletal infection care in our countries. The opportunity to engage with world-renowned experts, observe innovative treatment strategies, and foster international partnerships will undoubtedly influence future practice. Furthermore, the experience has laid a solid foundation for future collaborative research and contributed meaningfully to our ongoing efforts to enhance clinical outcomes in musculoskeletal infection management.



Thank you for the opportunity.

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