

Masci Scholar Personal Testimony



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My two-week observership in transplant nephrology at the National University Centre for Organ Transplantation (NUCOT) at the National University Hospital (NUH) in Singapore was full of learning and new experiences. During my stay, I shadowed Dr. Hersharan Kaur, Dr. Matthew D’Costa, and Dr. Emmett Wong, all renowned transplant nephrologists. I shadowed them during their daily rounds at the NUCOT ward and in their outpatient clinics.

I learned about preoperative and postoperative management in kidney transplant patients. I saw how complications of transplantation were managed, including antibody mediated rejection, CMV nephropathy, and BK virus nephropathy. I participated in discussions with residents and fellows in the preoperative management of kidney transplantation, including contraindications to transplantation, working up the donor and recipient prior to transplantation, and the pharmacology of the immunosuppressants used post-transplant.

I also observed performance of procedures such as kidney biopsy of the allograft, which was differently done compared to what I have observed at PGH. I also attended CME lectures at NUCOT. One lecture I attended was on anticoagulation for kidney transplant patients, highlighting the gaps in evidence and the lack of strong evidence on efficacy and safety of VKA and DOACs for kidney transplant recipients who require therapeutic anticoagulation.



Dr. Gonzales on his first day at NUCOT.

Additionally, I was oriented by the transplant coordinator head, Ms. Goh Chee Ling. The organ donation for deceased donors is via an opt out system, unlike the policies locally, thus they have more deceased organ donors and higher rates of kidney transplantation for CKD patients requiring RRT. They have around 100 kidney transplantations per year in Singapore.



Dr. Gonzales with Dr. Hersharan Kaur Sran, Medical Director of the Adult Kidney Transplantation Program at NUCOT.

I was also oriented on their policies for living kidney donors. The transplant coordinators serve as the bridge between the kidney transplant recipients and donors and the transplant nephrologists. They act like social workers for the patients. They also hold yearly outpatient wellness check-ups for the living kidney donors post-surgery, which I was able to observe.

My experience at NUH highlighted the Philippines' deficiencies in developing organ transplantation and showed me how patient care is done in a developed country, as well as how the semi-socialized healthcare system of Singapore effectively delivers for its population.

The observership gave me a lot of insights and ideas for research. I plan to make a systematic review on anticoagulation for kidney transplant recipients and possibly another one – a meta-analysis on the different pharmacologic

treatments for recurrent focal segmental glomerulosclerosis.

The experience gave me more insight on the future of nephrology, especially in our setting in the Philippines, and it increased my interest in nephrology as a possible subspecialization in the future.

I am very grateful to the Dr. Joseph R. Masci Legacy Project and to AIHA for giving me this opportunity. I will surely be applying my learnings and experiences from the observership to my future researches and in clinical practice.