SIU Training Scholarship: Endourology and Minimally Invasive Urological Surgery at Clinica Indisa, Santiago, Chile

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Tell us about your activities—what was a typical week like in the training center?

Each month we received the surgery schedule from the whole group of urologists, according to which we were distributed to attend surgeries, with robot-assisted surgery and endourological procedures as priorities. The surgical days were Monday to Friday, and the day began at 6:30 a.m. with the visit to the patients, and then to the surgery ward at 7:00 a.m. to review the patients' clinical data and begin the day's surgery. Two or more wards could be working simultaneously. On average 15 to 20 surgeries were performed per week.

What was your greatest achievement during your training?

Knowing, learning, and practicing on the da Vinci® Robot. During these 6 months, highly complex surgeries were performed, and I was able to attend several of them, including

- Ureteral reimplants
- Orthotopic urinary diversions
- Radical cystectomy
- Cystoprostatectomy
- Radical Prostatectomy
- Extended lymphadenectomy
- Pyeloplasty
- Partial nephrectomy
- Radical nephrectomy
- Simple prostatectomy in large prostate volume
- Urethral plasty with oral mucosa

What was the biggest challenge during your training?

Adapting to handling the equipment in the ward. It was a challenge, but at the same time, it was very helpful: learning the protocols and handling for the safe performance of each surgery allowed me to develop better skills for many procedures and thus gain confidence in performing them.

What was the greatest lesson you learned?

Dr Octavio Castillo always told us "the best learning is with patients, not in the operating room". Evaluating and understanding each patient is fundamental for a satisfactory surgical outcome. Only if you check carefully can you be sure that everything is going well, and right there you learn to identify when a possible complication may arise. So, it is not only learning to operate but also learning to check urological pathologies and their complications.

What has this scholarship meant to you personally? How has it enriched your academic career?

Receiving this scholarship has been an incredibly rewarding experience for me on a personal level. It means that my academic effort and achievements have been recognized, which fills me with pride and motivation to

FIGURE 1.

Carolina Segovia, performing cystorrhaphy tutored by Dr Castillo, Clinica Indisa



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continue striving. In addition, this scholarship has had a great impact on my academic career, as it has given me the opportunity to access resources and opportunities that were previously unavailable to me. Thanks to the scholarship, I have been able to participate in research projects, academic events and training programs that have broadened my knowledge and skills.

What are your plans following your scholarship?
I plan to continue my training in endourology and minimally invasive urology, and to actively participate in research that can have a positive impact on my institution. I also aspire to become involved in teaching projects that will allow me to apply my knowledge for the benefit of urology residents.

What is the greatest challenge in the institution you are returning to after your scholarship?
The biggest challenge in rejoining the institution after the fellowship could be to maintain a high level of academic excellence and continue the commitment to promote research and innovation in education. In addition, the institution may also face challenges related to updating technologies and resources to adapt to an ever-changing educational environment.

What is the greatest need in the community you are returning to?
After the fellowship, I feel that one of the greatest needs in my community is access to educational and developmental opportunities for disadvantaged groups. It is critical to work on programs that foster education and personal growth for those who face socioeconomic barriers so that they have equal opportunities and can contribute positively to the progress of the community.

What is the future of urological care in your community?
I think it looks promising, especially if there is greater awareness of the importance of prevention and early detection of urologic problems. I also hope to see advances in medical technology that will improve diagnosis and treatment, as well as greater collaboration among health care professionals to provide comprehensive and personalized care to patients.

What advice would you give to someone considering applying to this scholarship programme in this institution?
I would say, don't hesitate--this is a unique opportunity to enhance your academic and professional development. Be diligent and well-prepared. Submit an application that highlights accomplishments and goals, but just as important, be honest and authentic in your answers, showing how this scholarship will enable you to contribute positively to your community and to the larger society. Do not underestimate your potential—and take advantage of this opportunity to grow and make a difference.

The experience I gained from the scholarship is invaluable. I feel satisfied and very grateful for the opportunity given. My expectations were exceeded—and working with and learning from Dr Castillo was priceless.

FIGURE 2.

In the robotic surgery operating room at Clinica Indisa.
Right to left: Daniel Arribas, Carolina Segovia, Octavio Castillo, Juan Taveras

