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Gaining experience programme notes

I am Dr. Orkun Aydin. I work as psychiatrist in Turkey. I applied to the Gaining Experience 2017–2018 Programme. The European Psychiatric Association (EPA) administers the Gaining Experience Programme since 2014. The applicants must be Early Career Psychiatrists (ECPs) (psychiatrists under 40 years of age and/or 5 years after passing the specialist exam) and reside in a country included in the World Health Organisation Europe region, additionally residents and trainees are not eligible for this programme. The programme is aiming to offer Early Career Psychiatrists short (2–8 weeks) observership placements in various psychiatric institutions across Europe that will allow them to broaden their clinical, research and teaching skills and knowledge, and become familiar with different mental health systems in Europe, as well as to gather more ECPs under the EPA Early Career Psychiatrists Committee (ECPC) umbrella. 2017–2018 gaining experience programme is offering six countries including France, UK, Norway, Finland, Germany and Poland.

I made only one choice — Poland. There are several reasons for my preference. First, I have not been in Poland before and the location of Szczecin is so close to Berlin. Thus I can see both two countries. Moreover I am concerned in genetic background of psychiatric disorders and Professor Jerzy Samochowiec and his colleagues have plenty of publishings regarding this issue. Additionally I am also curious about the formation of this university psychiatry setting which hosts nearly hundred beds. I thought that it would be a great opportunity and

experience for me to broaden my research skills with this scholarship.

I have done a lot of things during my visit. Professor Jerzy Samochowiec and his colleagues make me feel like a member of their team. While I was attending my programme, the clinic was moving to renovated sections hence I could see the difference between the old and new building. The renovated building had excellent physical facilities such as mirrored rooms, extra safety preventions, comfortable and spacious rooms. During my stay, I attended morning meetings and inpatient visits everyday. I observed psychiatric examinations in ambulatory care with specialists and residents. Some of the patients could speak in English so I had a chance to communicate directly with them. I joined psychological assessments with psychologists and acknowledged the neuropsychological tests for Polish people. I visited the laboratories of genetics and learned the different assay methods. Additionally, I was informed regarding ongoing research studies of the clinic. Furthermore I was participated in Community Psychiatric Care and I visited Polish patients at their homes. In my opinion, this was the most interesting part of my stay. I could observe the Polish culture from a very close view and what could be done with these house-dependent patients.

In comparison, psychiatric care is very similar in Turkey. But there are some slight differences. For instance you can admit patients without consent if necessary, we send the required documents to the court. The court reports the decision in 10 days period. The judge never comes to hospital for interviewing with patient. The one of antipsychotic medication named paliperidon and its injectable form paliperidone palmitate are refundable in Turkey. The psychiatrists besides all clinicians in Turkey do not decide the money amount which the patient should pay for the prescribed drugs. This issue is arranged by government law according to the patients' income. When I compare the psychiatry residency, the duration of training is one year longer than Turkey and the monthly salary of the resident is lower than Turkey.

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Eventually, gaining this scholarship gives me a great privilege and also great contribution to my career. In my opinion, the biggest advantage of the scholarship is becoming familiar with different mental health systems in Europe, having a chance for comparison and moreover you are getting an opportunity for advertising your culture and country properly to colleagues in different countries. I like Szczecin so much. It is pretty city without traffic jam. You can go everywhere by trams. Because of winter it is cold a little but I think it gets better in summer. The city is

located near Berlin so it is so easy to travel around other countries. The people are so lovely and hospitable. I tried "Zubrówka" and "Pierogi". They are so tasteful.

I would like to thank Professor Jerzy Samochowiec for accepting and inviting me to the psychiatry department of Pomeranian University. I am so grateful for attending this program with him and also I would like to thank European Psychiatric Association for giving this great opportunity to me. I will always remember Szczecin with beautiful memories and great friends.