Report of the 18th EULAR Postgraduate Course
22 – 25 October 2017
Belgrade, Serbia

Akshat Pandey
The EULAR Postgraduate Course in Rheumatology is a unique and wonderful platform for young rheumatologists to meet the stalwarts and scientists in the world of Rheumatology. I am working as a Consultant Rheumatologist in my country, seeing thousands of patients with connective tissue diseases. The 2017 EULAR Postgraduate Course in Belgrade helped me a lot in clearing my doubts regarding day-to-day clinical practice. My area of interest is spondyloarthropathies, and I presented a case of “Etanercept-induced uveitis in a case of ankylosing spondylitis”, in a session of spondyloarthropathies by Professor van der Heijde. It was an amazing experience to listen to pioneers of Rheumatology all together in a friendly environment. This unique course is one of a kind and is very useful for young rheumatologists.

Superbly selected topics covering all subdivisions in subject, providing a podium to young rheumatologists to present cases in front of pioneers in the field, and then ample time for discussion and interactive sessions are memorable features of this EULAR course. It is a must undergo course for all rheumatologists to unfold the doubts and mysteries of rheumatology, enabling you to go back with enlightened vision to your country to serve the ailing community with “state of the art science.”

George Fragoulis
As a young rheumatologist (in the middle of my training) and as a clinical researcher, I thought it would be a good idea to attend the EULAR Postgraduate Course in Rheumatology, in Belgrade. It came to my attention through the EULAR website and my supervisor, who strongly encouraged me to attend.

Overall, it was a nice course for someone who is finishing, or has just finished rheumatology training. Several rheumatological conditions were covered, and we had the chance to hear various aspects of the diseases, from pathophysiology to clinical manifestations, imaging and treatment. The presentations were delivered by world-authorities in the field, in a manner that was understandable for a young trainee/specialist.

The interactive sessions with the “speakers of the day” were the best part, and added significant value to this course, as we had the chance to discuss - mostly based on cases presented by young fellows, in small groups and ask questions to the experts.
Finally, especially the younger of us, had the opportunity to be informed about EMEUNET and about current educational activities under the EULAR School of Rheumatology. I would like also to highlight the moving talk of the PARE representative, Mr Marios Kouloumas, who shared his personal story about living with rheumatoid arthritis.

What I got from this course, apart from new knowledge in specific diseases, is some basic principles that apply in rheumatology/clinical research. Specifically, the point of “early treatment” was highlighted once more and it was also very interesting to hear again that it is not only the new drugs that will help us to treat more effectively, but also the strategy we follow as clinicians. The “Treat-to-target” approach is increasingly recognised as a key principle in our everyday clinical practice. Furthermore, we heard some really inspiring lectures about the era of tailored treatment and personalised medicine, which is rapidly approaching. Linkage of basic science/immunology to the clinical practice is needed to better understand the diseases and treat our patients.

In terms of practicalities, everything was well organised and the time balance between lectures and free-time/networking was good. Also, importantly, all the meals were in the hotel and were included in the price, so we had time to catch-up with colleagues, to make new friends and enjoy high-quality food in a nice environment. Nevertheless, there was also some time to see the beautiful and historical city of Belgrade. In summary, it was a worth going meeting for someone who wants to keep updated or to do have a good knowledge brush up on rheumatic diseases.

**Mariana Luís**

Being a young trainee in Rheumatology, this was my first contact with the EULAR professors. I found it quite exciting to meet face to face with all those people whose names you read daily on scientific papers. Lectures go from classical themes to newly emerging issues, sometimes in a quite provocative way. Workshops address either clinical and scientific subjects in a very practical and straightforward manner that you will not find in books. So be ready to take notes, you will thank them later when writing an article or dealing with a difficult case. You are invited to question the speakers during their lectures but also to raise your own issues in the meet the professor sessions. This last one was actually my favourite. You can bring to the table any subject you would like to see debated in a truly brainstorming session.

So, if you are currently working on a project and want to hear different perspectives and opinions, or if you are planning to start one and need some inspiration, this is the time and place to do it. Bursaries are available and provide a unique opportunity to present and discuss your own clinical case with the leading experts on the subject in a relaxed family atmosphere. You also have the chance to meet and exchange experiences with other colleagues from all across the globe. I think the course is suitable for all ages and career levels and indeed you can find all types of participants. You can come and learn from scratch or just update your knowledge. I ended up doing a little bit of both and couldn’t be more satisfied with the experience. For my part, I definitely intend to return in my last year as a trainee.
Valentina Vardanyan
I work as an attending rheumatologist at the hospital department since 2008. I am also an Associate Professor at the Department of Internal Medicine in Yerevan State Medical University. I think that continuous medical education in Rheumatology is the essential guarantee of successful professional activity, career development of medical doctors, and from the global point of view – of the wellbeing of patients with rheumatic diseases. So, one should constantly amplify their knowledge, regardless of professional experience - a trainee or a professor. It is for that reason I undertook the EULAR Postgraduate Course.

The course (lectures, meals, accommodation) was held in the Crowne Plaza Belgrade hotel, which was very nice and comfortable. EULAR provided about 20 travel bursaries to participants, who delivered case presentations (the selection was done about a month before the start of the course). The course was delivered mainly in lecture format, with several more individual workshops.

The EULAR Postgraduate Course is a fantastic opportunity to stay in touch with all scientific achievements, new and updated approaches to diagnosis and treatment of rheumatic diseases. Besides, it offers an unbelievable chance to communicate with the luminaries of Rheumatology in person, give all the worrying questions and learn how intelligent a doctor should be. I participated in the course in 2013, and this year I came back again. In my opinion, the course is great value for money. And there is one thing I should say –it never disappoints!