



ASDS International Preceptorship Program

A Pioneer's Vision to Introduce Mohs Surgery in Austria's Health Care System

By Lena Hampel, MD

By being awarded the 2017 ASDS International Preceptorship, I got the opportunity to visit Christopher Miller, MD, at the University of Pennsylvania, Department of Dermatology in Philadelphia during March 2018.

Dr. Miller is a dedicated medical doctor with passion for detail and accuracy and a wonderful mentor with endurance to teach all the fellows, residents, medical

students and observers like myself. The staff nurses and histopathology technicians at the department gave me a warm welcome and thorough answers to all my questions throughout the visit.

There are three aspects that made my experience unique and of great value for my future as a dermatologist and a Mohs surgeon.

❶ What impressed me the most is Dr. Miller's incredible knowledge of all the anatomical structures, layers, landmarks and their relationships and how these influence the design of a flap and the successful outcome. I learned principles in flap design and other reconstruction techniques.

❷ Secondly, I had the opportunity to enrich my dermato-histopathological knowledge by reading many histology-slides with Dr. Miller. The MART1 staining for diagnosis of melanomas on frozen specimen caught my interest, because I think the working field of Mohs surgeons will be expanded in the future with this technique.

❸ Finally, I could observe the whole treatment process of a Mohs surgeon, from the initial consultation until the postoperative care, and picked up tips and tricks how to run a successful day-surgery clinic.

In Austria, I work as an office-based dermatologist in my own private practice and as a locum doctor. Due to my personal focus on dermatosurgery, I benefited in many ways from the



Drs. Hampel and Miller with histopathology technicians.

preceptorship. It had an enormous impact on my knowledge of the relevant anatomy of the skin and adjacent tissue for skin reconstruction, which will improve my surgical approach to skin flaps and complex closures in the future. I will implement many things I learned in my daily work routine such as excisional shave biopsies for suspicious naevi, which is not yet common in Austria.

Mohs surgery is not yet regularly performed nor trained in Austria as a matter of rules of professional conduct and health care legal issues. But as the resources for inpatient care decrease, more and more health treatments are going to be transferred to an outpatient setting. Now that I'm aware of the necessity to take further steps to implement Mohs surgery, I am aiming for

an international Mohs fellowship. Soon my time will come to be a pioneer and introduce Mohs surgery into the health care system in Austria. Where there's a will, there's a way!

I wish to express my gratitude to ASDS for enabling me to participate in its International Preceptorship Program and to Dr. Miller for this great experience. ●



Dr. Hampel works alongside a plastic surgeon on rotation and Dr. Miller.



Drs. Miller and Hampel



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