

## **A pioneer vision to introduce Mohs surgery in Austria's health care system**

Being awarded by the ASDS International Preceptorship Program 2017, I got the opportunity to visit Dr. Christopher Miller at the department for Mohs and Reconstructive Surgery at Penn Medicine, University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in March 2018.

Dr. Miller is a dedicated medical doctor with passion for detail and accuracy. He is a wonderful mentor with endurance to teach all the fellows, residents, medical students and observers as myself. The staff nurses and histopathology technicians at the department gave me a warm welcome and supported me with thoroughly answers to all my questions throughout the while visit.

There are three aspects during my observership I want to point out, which, besides many other things, made my experience unique and of great value for my further future as a dermatologist and a Mohs surgeon, I strive to become. Firstly, which impressed me the most is the incredibly knowledge of Dr. Miller of all the anatomical structures, layers, landmarks and their relationships and how these influence the design of a flap and the successful outcome. Therefore I learned very much about principles how to design a flap and other reconstruction techniques. Secondly, I had the opportunity to enrich my dermato-histopathological knowledge by reading many histology-slides with Dr. Miller. Especially the MART1 staining for diagnosis of melanomas on frozen specimen caught my interest, because with this technique I think the working field of Mohs surgeons will be expanded in the future.

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 benefit in many ways from the observership. Based on all of Dr. Millers explanations, drawings, papers, photos, videos and bedside teaching the observership had an enormous impact on my knowledge of the relevant anatomy of the skin and adjacent tissue for skin reconstruction. This will improve my surgical approach to skin flaps and complex closures in the future. Further more I could update my dermato-histopathology knowledge and learn how Mohs surgeons read histology-slides. I spotted and refreshed many other things during the observership, which I will implement in my daily work routine such as excisional shave biopsies for suspicious naevi, which is not yet common in Austria.

The observership with Dr. Miller was a milestone in my personal goal on the pathway to become a Mohs surgeon 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 such as a day surgery unit. Being aware of the necessity to take further steps to implement Mohs surgery, I am now aiming for an international Mohs fellowship. So my time will come to be a pioneer and to introduce Mohs surgery into the healthcare system in Austria. Where there's a will, there's a way.

Lastly, I wish to express my gratitude to the ASDS for enabling me the participation in the International Preceptorship Program 2017 and to Dr. Miller for this great experience.