

## ESCMID Observership Report

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I recently returned from a week-long Observership in a Collaborative Centre, the University Hospital Farhat Hached, in the coastal city of Sousse, Tunisia. The Farhad Hached hospital, a 700-bed facility which opened in 1947, is located on Avenue Ibn El Jazzar in the city centre close to the Medina and beautifully surrounded by palms. The Infectious Diseases Department led by Prof Amel Letaief is a national reference centre for many infectious diseases and most recently also H1N1 influenza. The conditions treated in the department are UTIs, hepatitis B and C (400 followed patients), skin and soft tissue infections (approx. 100 patients/year), HIV infections (55 followed patients), rickettsioses and tick borne diseases (20-30 cases/year in the summer), tuberculosis, FEO, meningitis and encephalitis as well as diabetic foot infections. And why did I choose Sousse? The answer is simple: Tunisia is one of the most popular tourist destinations of the Polish people, so having hands-on-experience in microbiology and infectious diseases of that region is vital for a Polish physician.

On the first day the Professor and the doctors there gave me a warm welcome and immediately I joined them in everyday activities, meetings and ward rounds. Coming from a clinical microbiology background, I participated in the daily tasks of the infectious diseases department staff. I had the opportunity to look at different infections from the clinician's point of view, e.g. many diabetic foot patients, suspected meningitis, sepsis, erysipelas, TB and also rickettsial cases, which are quite numerous in the department during the summer and to participate in consultations in the emergency room and the outpatient department. I also visited the university hospital microbiology and parasitology departments and was given a tour of the labs. I had the possibility to exchange ideas and share my experiences with the Tunisian colleagues and also familiarise them with my line of work by means of a presentation.

When having an Observership in such a warm country, one has to be prepared for August temperatures in excess of 30°C, and aware that air-conditioning is available only in some places. But then again, after a hard day at work there is the beach and Mediterranean Sea, excellent food and coffee. And for those looking for something totally exciting after work, there are camels, the Sahara desert and beautiful ancient cities.

Thanks to a straightforward application procedure, the processing of the Observership was extremely swift. Owing to my busy academic schedule, the summertime is always the best period for me to participate in any conferences, courses and training. I applied in June, and I already received the approval by mid-July. Summing up, the Observership turned out to be a unique experience, and in fact exceeded my expectations.

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In front of the University Hospital Medical Faculty in Sousse, Tunisia.



On University Hospital Medical Faculty grounds in Sousse.



Kissing a camel? No, it's cactus feeding time.