

Danny Simpson's Rotation in Vienna!

Based on my research interests in image-guided brachytherapy, I decided to spend my away rotation at Allgemeines Krankenhaus (AKH) Wien (Vienna General Hospital) where Dr. Richard Pötter, a luminary in image-guided brachytherapy and world-renowned radiotherapist, is the chairman of radiation oncology.



AKH is a massive 2,200 bed hospital with a state-of-the-art brachytherapy department boasting an MRI machine, two-dedicated operating rooms, and multiple dedicated brachytherapy suites equipped with remote afterloaders for both HDR and PDR brachytherapy. Navigating the hospital was an excellent way to learn German.



My first day in the department, I was greeted by Dr. Daniel Berger, a clinical physicist with expertise in brachytherapy.



In addition to being a very busy clinical physicist, Dr. Berger served as my unofficial department guide. Dr. Berger was a very talented physicist and wonderful teacher. Everyone in the department greeted me warmly and was very happy to have me visit. The department employed an impressive army of international research fellows from Saudi Arabia, Japan, and India.

My weekly routine at AKH was comprised of attending brachytherapy implants and assisting MRI-guided treatment planning. I worked closely with Dr. Alina Sturdza, a radiation oncologist with expertise in brachytherapy and gynecologic malignancies. Dr. Sturdza, a former fellow at AKH and protégé of Dr. Pötter, was a highly skilled brachytherapist. While working with her, I was able to participate in several complicated cases for treatment of cervical, endometrial, and vaginal cancer.

In addition to my time spent in the brachytherapy department, I also attended weekly research meetings where we discussed ongoing projects in the department as well as the multi-center EMBRACE study. The number of ongoing research projects and collaborative efforts in the department amazed me. I had the pleasure of sharing some of my research interests on NTCP modeling for small bowel toxicity during a departmental presentation. This was a great experience. At the end of my rotation, Dr. Mundt even came to visit and tour the department. We used our time there to meet with Dr. Pötter and discuss potential collaboration for the upcoming EMBRACE 2 trial.



My time in Vienna wasn't all work. I had the pleasure of enjoying a breathtaking city on my daily walk to and from the hospital. The hospital is surrounded by many beautiful parks and museums, where I was able to spend my afternoons and weekends with my wife and son. This was a truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will never forget!

Danny Simpson
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We took a trip to Budapest. This is my family on Varhegy (Castle Hill) overlooking the Danube.



Széchenyi Lanchíd (Chain Bridge) connecting Buda and Pest.



Orszaghaz (Parliament) building on the Pest side of Budapest.

