

Dear European Society of Human Genetics Education Committee members,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG) for granting me the opportunity to take part in the 2026 Observership Programme. I had the privilege of spending four weeks, from the 1st to the 28th of February, at the Clinical Institute of Genomic Medicine (CIGM) of the University Clinical Centre in Ljubljana, Slovenia, under the supervision of Professor Borut Peterlin.

I am a second-year medical genetics resident at the University Hospital of Split, Croatia. I have an interest in hereditary cancer syndromes, both germline variant interpretation and genetic counselling, and this observership offered me an ideal setting to better myself in both areas.

The main focus of my stay was variant interpretation at the Centre for Mendelian Genomics, a part of CIGM. I worked alongside a number of clinical and molecular geneticists, each with expertise in different areas, including paediatric genetics, cardiogenetics, and oncogenetics, which allowed me to see how interpretation principles are applied across very different clinical contexts. They introduced me to both the general framework for germline variant classification and the field- and gene-specific guidelines. In the first days I observed my hosts as they worked through cases, following their reasoning for variant classification. Later I was given cases to interpret independently, after which we reviewed my classifications together and discussed which criteria should be applied and why. These discussions were the most valuable part of the observership for me, as they helped guide my judgement for applying criteria in different contexts. My hosts also searched their archive for past cases involving variants whose interpretation had not been straightforward, and working through these taught me about handling conflicting or incomplete evidence.

I was also warmly invited to join genetic counselling sessions at the Genetics Clinic. Whenever a clinical geneticist or resident had a particularly interesting case, they would invite me to attend if I was available. With the help of members of the institute, I was also able to arrange a visit to the Institute of Oncology in Ljubljana, where I observed genetic counselling and multidisciplinary team meetings for patients with hereditary cancer syndromes. Given my own focus, this was especially instructive, as it showed how geneticists, oncologists, surgeons and other specialists reach joint decisions on surveillance and risk-reducing management.

Observing how clinical genetics is practised in a well-resourced setting (structured workflows, advanced technologies, and close clinician-laboratory collaboration) was particularly inspiring, given the comparatively limited resources currently available in Split. I am sincerely grateful to Professor Borut Peterlin for hosting me, and to the entire team at CIGM for their openness, patience and willingness to teach throughout the four weeks. I return to Split with considerably more knowledge about germline variant interpretation and with practical ideas I hope to apply in my own department. I would warmly encourage other young geneticists to apply for the ESHG Observership Programme.

Sincerely,
Marin Ogorevc, MD, PhD
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