

Mentorship Programme Report

I am grateful and honored to have been selected for the Mentorship Programme and for the unique opportunity to visit the Genetic Laboratory Department of the Liege University Clinical Hospital (CHU Liege) after the ESHG 2024 conference. I spent five working days there (June 5-11), under the mentorship of Dr. Jean-Stephane Gatot, the head of the Genetic Laboratory at Liege University Hospital, an auditor, and a member of the ELSI working group of BeSHG. During this period, I had the privilege of exploring advanced non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) using whole-genome sequencing (WGS) technology.

Dr. Gatot and his team, who have developed and validated a NIPT WGS test, were exceptionally welcoming and ready to share their knowledge. They demonstrated each step of the test, from sampling to data analysis. My experience included becoming acquainted with the comprehensive structure of the laboratory, understanding the workflow, and the integration of various departments. I actively participated in the practical aspects of the procedure, gaining hands-on experience in the application of NIPT WGS. We engaged in in-depth discussions about final reporting, additional findings, confirmatory tests, and guidelines for reporting the findings.

This mentorship program has been a transformative experience, providing me with both a mentor and a long-term collaborator. I am optimistic that this collaboration will start a new era of NIPT tests and overall prenatal diagnostics in Armenia. The knowledge and skills I have gained significantly contribute to my professional development and the advancement of prenatal diagnostics in my home country.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Gatot, his team, and the organizers of this mentorship programme. The insights and experiences gained during my time in Liege have been invaluable. I am excited about the future possibilities and collaborations that this mentorship has set in motion. This experience marks a significant milestone in my professional journey, and I am eager to apply the knowledge and skills acquired to improve prenatal diagnostics in Armenia.

Anna Hovhannisyan, PhD

Clinical Laboratory Geneticist