

Report on the ESHG International Mentorship Programme

I had been interested in the ESHG International Mentorship Programme since last year's programme. I initially reached out to several potential mentors, but I was late with my registration. Nevertheless, I remained determined to apply the following year. I was absolutely thrilled and honoured to be selected for the programme. This achievement represents not only an important milestone in my professional development but also the value of persistence and determination.

As part of the programme, I had the privilege of completing a clinical attachment at Saint Mary's Hospital, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust. This provided me with invaluable exposure to genetic counselling services within the NHS and an opportunity to reflect on how these services compare with current practice in Qatar. I attended a range of genetic counselling clinics and observed the interactions between genetic counsellors, clinicians, and patients. I also participated in multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings, including Cancer Genetics MDTs, as well as discussions relating to Huntington disease, inherited hearing loss, and predictive testing pathways.

The attachment was particularly relevant to my current role as an Assistant Genetic Counsellor in Cancer Genetics. It allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of NHS genetic counselling practice while gaining insight into UK clinical guidelines and management pathways, referral criteria, reflective practice models, and the complexities of family dynamics in cascade testing.

In addition, I attended the MAHSE Research Day, a platform for Scientist Training Programme (STP) and other trainees to showcase innovative work through oral and poster presentations and to engage with colleagues and supervisors. I attended a range of presentations and discussed research posters relevant to my scientific interests. Speaking with trainees provided me with a better understanding of their experiences and the training pathway, and helped me to consider how this opportunity could contribute to my future professional development.

I am sincerely grateful to ESHG for supporting this mentorship opportunity. The programme provided me with valuable clinical and professional exposure and has contributed significantly to my knowledge, confidence, and professional growth. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Genetic Counsellor Sarah Stewart, for her exceptional mentorship, encouragement, and generosity in sharing her expertise.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to the entire Genetics team at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust for their warm welcome, kindness, and willingness to include me as part of the team from the very beginning. This experience has been both professionally enriching and personally inspiring, and I look forward to applying what I have learned to my ongoing development and to genetic counselling practice in Qatar.

Huda Farah
Assistant Genetic Counselor