

## TFR Course 2017:

### *Engagement in making relevant, feasible and publishable research*

*I am not the most academic student, but I realize that to conduct a study I am passionate about, could really work...Research is really fun (and even funnier than I expected)...*

- TFR Course 2017 participant

**Event title:** EUROSPINE TFR Course 2017

**Location:** Munich, Germany

**Date:** 13-17 March 2017

**Number of participants:** 16

16 participants from 5 different countries: Belgium, Egypt, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland came together in the heart of the city centre in Munich, Germany to learn how to make their research more relevant, feasible and publishable. 10 of them were surgeons (3 of which are residents), 2 engineers who are also PhD candidates, 3 medical students and 1 clinical researcher from industry.



10 world class faculty members were present from institutions in France, the United States, Switzerland, Canada, and Germany. A programme of 5 modules on the conceptual overview of clinical research, research design, study implementation and analysis, qualitative studies and communication of research was effectively delivered by the faculty. A rich combination of formats was designed for blended learning with readings, lectures, plenary sessions, group work, faculty mentoring, roundtable discussions and group feedback.



The main take-home messages for the participants were really on the importance of certain aspects that are key to the success of their research projects. Collaboration in research was emphasised as motivation and teamwork will go hand in hand to deliver a successful research project. It is important to ask help and get the views of other experts. The preparation and planning phase is critical in order to get it right with regards to the research question,

the design, the population and the impact that the research project will have in practice. And lastly, the element of engagement and fun whilst undertaking the research project cannot be overemphasised and the course attempted to simulate this experience for the participants. Doing research on topics that you are passionate about will lead to an excellent and fulfilling project.

There are the lectures and plenary sessions where concepts are learnt. Participants were divided into groups where they in turn for the next 4 days prepare their own research projects. Within their teams, they get the chance to collaborate, be mentored by the faculty, formulate their research question, design their research, scan the literature and basically get hands-on experience on doing research. At the end of the day, group feedback which also



serves as a debriefing is done. Various teaching points are discussed and the groups get motivated to explore a different direction or go deeper on an approach decided by their respective groups. On the last day, they present their research projects before the faculty panel. The environment of academic exchange is simulated. This also serves as their examination and a sum-up of the past week's learnings. Participants worked very hard during the course days and hopefully had a first-hand experience on doing research.

Here are some answers of participants when asked for their top take home messages from the course:

- *Research question should address an improvement in patient's daily life. Clearly formulated research questions makes the research easier to communicate.*
- *Research is fun and it's worth to do research... Network! Work together whenever you can...I surely will have a different view on the literature I'm reading. It will be much easier to figure out how good the quality of the study is*
- *Research is fun...Don't hesitate to ask other people's opinions. There is no perfect study but you should aim for it.*

The Task Force Research aims to support research, educate researchers and foster an active research community within the EUROSPINE and the spine care community.

**The next TFR Course will be in [Porto, Portugal on 12-16 March 2018](#). Save the dates and see you there!**

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