HOW TO MAKE YOUR RESEARCH MORE RELEVANT, FEASIBLE AND PUBLISHABLE

12-16 March 2018 – Porto, Portugal

EVENT SUMMARY
13 participants bravely faced an extraordinary storm in Porto to take part in the EUROSPINE 2018 TFR Course “How to make your research more relevant, feasible and publishable”. This highly interactive course was hosted by Professor Paulo Pereira on 12-16 March 2018 at the Crowne Plaza in Porto, Portugal.

Participants represented 7 countries worldwide: Portugal (n=6), Germany (n=2), France (n=1), Egypt (n=1), Mexico (n=1), The Netherlands (n=1), Saudi Arabia (n=1).

Spine specialists including orthopedic surgeons and neurosurgeons were well represented. A mechanical engineer, a chiropractor and several 1st and 4th year residents also took part.

Each day of the course was divided into lectures about the theory and methodology of clinical research and provided insight on how to properly design a study. Cohort studies, sample size calculation and qualitative studies were also discussed.

Lectures were followed by practical workshops. Participants were grouped in small teams allowing for a high level of interaction in each group.

On day one, the groups were asked to formulate a research question and derive a hypothesis for the evaluation of a treatment intervention. One group wanted to investigate OLIF effectiveness versus MISS-TLIF in improving functional outcome for degenerative grade
I/II spondylolisthesis, another group explored if patient-tailored early rehabilitation improves disability of patients with residual post-surgery low back pain.

The third group decided to conduct a multicentric superiority randomised controlled trial on a novel M6-L lumbar prosthesis as an alternative to anterior lumbar fusion in the assessment of adults with degenerative disc disease (DDD).

In the following days and with guidance from the faculty, each group had to start designing their studies based on the research question formulated on the first day. The teams then started planning participants selection, data collection and started planning their sample size calculation.

On the fourth day of this intense week, participants were given the opportunity to experience a focus group. This session was especially designed to illustrate how focus group methods can be used to define disability.

Finally, the groups were left to work on their own to prepare their podium presentations, which were commented and assessed by the faculty on the final day of the course.

During the week, participants also had the opportunity to hear first-hand from the European Spine Journal chief editor, Professor Gunzburg, about how the review and publication process works. They were given expert tips for their future publications.

The use of Spine Tango registry data for clinical research was also explained by Dr Mannion and on the last day of the course Professor Nordin, EUROSPINE Past-President and a highly experienced researcher, gave her views on why research is rewarding (and fun).

When asked to comment on the course, a participant from Germany said “I really liked the enthusiastic faculty team. You cared for every individual participant. It was intensive and I improved my knowledge as well as my motivation for doing henceforth research. I met interesting people and I think it will increase my network.”

Another added “Workgroup times were really fun, interesting, rich in exchange/consensus, a good way to apply what is learned during the course. The course is varied: biostatistics, qualitative approach, quantitative approach, methodological advices... it gives to us lots of tools we can use in our future. The focus group was a different approach and applying just after the course was a good idea, it was interesting to exchange about what all of us
think regarding the proposed questions. This is a full-time week, rich in knowledge, and we had no time to get bored - so thanks to all for their time!”

We congratulate all the participants for their enthusiasm and teamwork. We wish to express our gratitude to our faculty members for their lectures and for animating high quality interactive sessions throughout this very intensive course. Our deepest thanks to our hosts, Professor Pereira and our local clinical expert Dr Santos Silva for their help with organising this course, giving their expert feedback and for their warm welcome.

Our thanks go also to the Crowne Plaza staff for their availability, efficiency and professionalism.

This course is held every year in March. It is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in research or who plans to apply for research grants.

The EUROSPINE also sponsors development, pilot study and main study grants. Additional information can be found here. The application process for 2018 is closed but the 2019 application deadline will be advertised on our website and newsletter.