

Title: My Fellowship Experience at Hemophilia and Thrombosis Center Angelo Bianchi Bonomi Milan Italy

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Introduction and Background

Bleeding disorders affect a number of the population and are prevalent globally. They include von Willebrand disease (vWD), hemophilia A, B and C and other factor deficiencies. They cause morbidity and can disrupt daily activity of the affected individuals especially in the severe forms. They also pose high level of economic burden in the health facilities especially in the developing countries with limited resources (1).

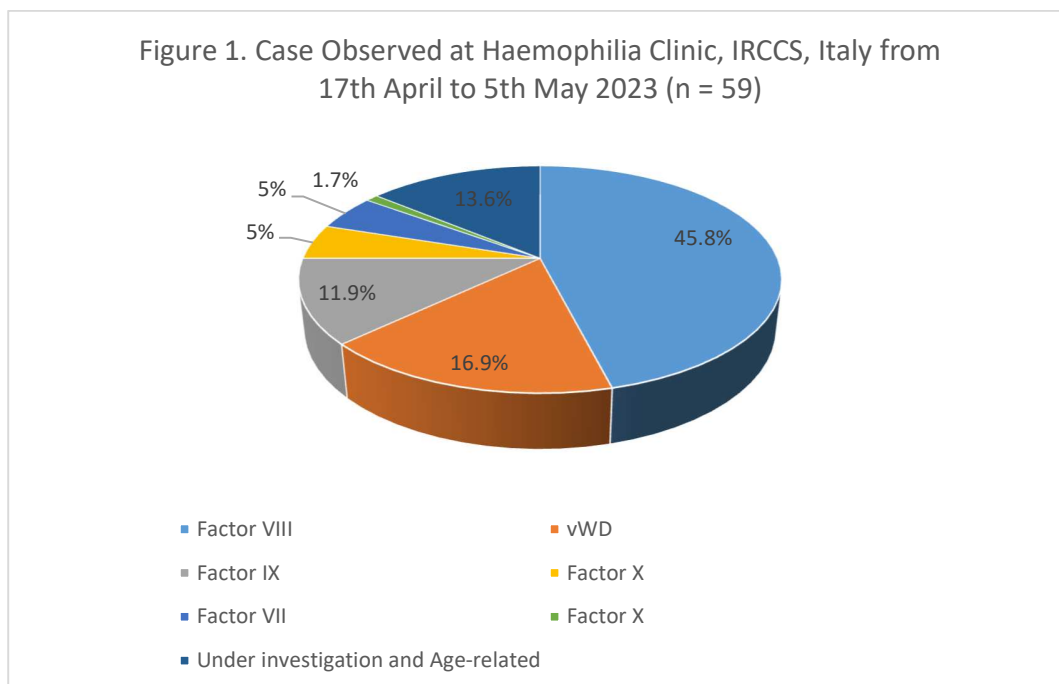
Lesotho recently in 2022 established its first hemophilia treatment center (HTC) where hemophilia and other rare bleeding disorders are managed. The new development has created demand among people living with hemophilia and hence the need to provide a better health care. This led to application for a Fellowship sponsored by World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH) which was successful and led to the training at the Angelo Bianchi Bonomi Hemophilia and Thrombosis Centre, Fondazione IRCCS Ca' Granda, Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico, Milan, Italy where I was tutored by Prof Flora Peyvandi, Prof Mannuccio Mannucci and the entire staff.

Experience

The fellowship training lasted for a period of three (3) weeks from 17th April to 7th May 2023 which was packed with many activities. It comprised of clinic, physiotherapy and laboratory sessions.

Ambulatory Clinic

There were a total 59 cases seen during this period with factor VIII deficiency accounting for almost half of the patients seen. They are shown in figure 1 below.



The clinics were for screening, severe hemophilia, von Willebrand disease annual follow-up and rheumatology clinics. The use of ISTH BAT Score was demonstrated and its importance emphasized.

The rheumatology clinic showed the use of ultrasound to identify bleeding in the joints and muscles including the minor bleeds. The assessment of the health of cartilages of people living with hemophilia were observed.

Physiotherapy Unit

The need for periodic physiotherapy assessment for people living with hemophilia was made especially on mobility and prevention of muscle atrophy and contracture. Hemophilia Joint Health Scoring (HJHS) technique was shown by the physiotherapist. Baropodometric Barefoot Analysis was also demonstrated. Its use for checking the centre of gravity, stiffness, side balancing, pain detection and difficulty in standing were shown.

Laboratory Sessions

The laboratory was visited. The modes of operation at the coagulation factor assay, the von Willebrand disease antigen and antibody testing as well as the multimerization laboratory were observed with question-and-answer sessions.

Social Times

The entire staff of the Hemophilia and Thrombosis centre were very friendly, highly spirited and very eager to teach and explain things. The last day of the fellowship was heart-warming with encouraging farewell words from the staff.

CONCLUSION

The fellowship training at the Angelo Bianchi Bonomi Hemophilia and Thrombosis Centre was highly impactful and has improved my diagnostic and management skills. The many patients seen at the centre gave me opportunity to build my skills and competence.

We hope to foster a lasting collaboration with the hemophilia centre for continuous quality improvement in the management of hemophilia and other rare bleeding disorders in Lesotho.

Acknowledgement

I wish to specially acknowledge Prof Peyvandi, Prof Mannucci, the entire staff and patients of Angelo Bianchi Bonomi Hemophilia and Thrombosis Centre, Milan Italy. I also acknowledge World Federation of Haemophilia (WFH), International Haemophilia Training Centre (IHTC), Haemophilia Association of Lesotho (HAL) and Haemophilia Treatment Centre (HTC) Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Lesotho.

References

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