



UKRAINE PAEDIATRIC FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

2017 IMPACT REPORT





Dr. Myroslava Romach and Dr. Olha Tychkivska speak to guests at the June 2017 celebration and media event at Lviv City Children's Clinical Hospital to honour the Temerty Foundation and the Ukrainian-Canadian community.

BUILDING CAPACITY

ADVISORY VISITS CONTINUE TO FOSTER EXCHANGE AND DEVELOP EXPERTISE IN CHILD BRAIN HEALTH IN UKRAINE

BY END OF 2017,
THE PROGRAM
SUPPORTED:

8

ADVISORY
VISITS

6

PARTNER
HOSPITALS

24

OBSERVERS

1

FULL-YEAR
CLINICAL
FELLOW

The Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program has been enabled by the vision of SickKids, Children of Chernobyl Canadian Fund, Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and the philanthropic support of the Ukrainian-Canadian community.

In June 2017, Dr. Myroslava Romach, Medical Director, and Dr. James Rutka, Program Director, led the seventh advisory visit to Ukraine, with Canadian colleagues Dr. Eric Bouffet (neuro-oncologist), Dr. Eisha Christian (Chief Fellow Neurosurgery), and Dr. Andrea Andrade (neurologist). This trip re-visited Odessa and Lviv, and travelled for the first time to Kharkiv.

Training & Consulting: In Kharkiv, Drs. Romach and Rutka gave lectures at the Congress of the Ukrainian Association of Neurosurgeons, highlighting best practices and the latest research in neurosurgery. In Odessa, Drs. Rutka and Christian consulted on difficult neurosurgical cases. In Lviv, Drs. Rutka and Christian held over 50

neurosurgery consultations; Dr. Bouffet conducted over 50 neuro-oncology consultations and gave workshops and seminars on neuro-oncology with Dr. Roman Kizyma; and Dr. Andrade held 67 epilepsy and stroke consultations and mentored local clinicians on the review and interpretation of brain MRIs and EEGs.

At Lviv City Children's Clinical Hospital, Drs. Taras Mykytyn, Rutka, and Christian performed three complex brain surgeries. Access to these types of operations is limited in most regions of Ukraine due to the lack of advanced surgical technology in paediatric hospitals. Twelve neurosurgeons from Lviv and other parts of Ukraine observed the operations in real time via a video monitor on the newly acquired operating microscope. Thanks to the Temerty Foundation's equipment fund, Lviv has the first fully equipped paediatric neurosurgical operating room in western Ukraine.

Dr. Romach participated in a symposium organized by the Lviv Oblast Health Department as part of a perinatal maternal mental health awareness campaign. She gave lectures on perinatal maternal mental health treatment guidelines and management of fetal loss.

Advocacy: Dr. Romach also consulted with Ukrainian partners on a campaign, led by Dr. Olha Tychkivska, to reduce the high rate of children born with congenital neural tube defects (spina bifida) in Ukraine by advocating the government to mandate domestic flour fortification with folate.

Recognition: An event was held to honour the Temerty Foundation's donation of essential neurosurgical equipment to the Lviv City Children's Clinical Hospital and Ukrainian-Canadian support of the program. Senior government officials attended, including Dr. Ulana Suprun, acting Minister of Health in Ukraine, Canadian Ambassador Roman Waschuk, and Oksana Wynnyckyj-Yusypovych, Honorary Consul of Canada in Ukraine. The event was a great success and secured significant media coverage.

In October 2017, Dr. Romach led the eighth advisory visit, to Lviv, which included training and mentorship on perinatal maternal mental health, neurology, urology, and cystic fibrosis, a new area of focus for the program.



Our efforts to build surgical capacity by teaching new skills have been held back by the lack of advanced surgical technology in Ukraine. Thanks to the Temerty Foundation's generous equipment fund, we have been able to outfit the first—and only—fully equipped paediatric neurosurgical operating room in western Ukraine. Now, we are well-positioned to teach advanced surgical skills.

PLANNING AHEAD

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

As we complete the program's fourth year, this is a time to look back on our achievements, enablers, and next steps to expand the program and sustain its successes.

Since 2013, the initiative has grown into a brain health program that includes neurology, oncology, psychiatry, and genetics. We have influenced the introduction of new surgical procedures and patient care practices, witnessed growing support for team-based approaches, and observed an increase in patient referrals to regional partner hospitals.

Our program has been enabled by the vision, commitment, and philanthropy of the Ukrainian-Canadian community, which provided the financial independence to create meaningful change. Our collaborators in Ukraine have also been key, and we are optimistic about the potential for health system reform under Dr. Ulana Suprun's leadership.

We are engaging potential partners in eastern Ukraine to establish our first site there. We are also exploring options to expand the program into neonatology. Genetic testing is another area of potential growth for the program. Although we've observed some unusual, rare syndromes during our advisory visits, there are limited genotyping facilities in Ukraine. We also wish to help foster a culture of data collection among our Ukrainian colleagues to monitor and improve patient outcomes.

OBSERVERSHIPS

PIONEERING CHANGE

SickKids observerships nurture leadership in Ukraine's paediatric brain health clinicians

In May 2017, Dr. Olha Tychkivska began her SickKids observership in paediatric neurology, EEG, and neuroimaging with Dr. Cristina Go. A paediatrician at Lviv City Children's Clinical Hospital, Dr. Tychkivska is working toward a PhD on neonatal seizures and quality of life. She has been trialling neonatal EEG methods over the last two years using and adapting old equipment she found at the hospital. But, she says, "it's very hard to work when you don't have a teacher."

Dr. Tychkivska has benefitted from many mentors. Introduced to the program team when she interpreted during an advisory visit in 2015, she has been encouraged by Dr. Andrade, who continues to help her develop neonatal EEG methodology. The observership allowed her to learn about diagnostic and treatment protocols, access core textbooks and journals, and be immersed in EEG use and interpretation.

Back in Ukraine, Dr. Tychkivska is sharing her new knowledge with colleagues, promoting a team-based approach, and advocating for protocols that can be implemented. She also left Canada with more certainty about neonatal EEG methodology, and she will lead the development of a neonatal epilepsy program in Lviv. Another way Dr. Tychkivska is pioneering change is by leading the advocacy campaign and lobbying the Ministry of Health to mandate flour fortification with folate to prevent spina bifida.

Past observer Dr. Yuriy Kolivoshka completed his year-long neonatal surgical fellowship at SickKids in June 2017. He says of his experience, "they teach you to be a master. They build that confidence in you. A fellowship at SickKids, it gives you more respectability."

In November 2017, the program will sponsor four more observerships at SickKids: Dr. Taras Havryliv (Uzhhorod) and Dr. Ihor Yushchak (Odessa) in neurosurgery; Dr. Oksana Lozytska (Lviv) in neurology; and Dr. Kateryna Svidnyak (Lviv) in neonatology. We look forward to providing you with an update on their observerships.

THANK YOU.

Every day, SickKids is working towards improving the lives of children, and our success depends on the generosity of donors like you. Your commitment to the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program ensures that we can continue to offer children the best possible health outcomes, regardless of where they live.

Thank you for your remarkable generosity.



www.sickkidsfoundation.com/Ukraine

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