

A photograph of two women smiling. The woman on the left has long, wavy brown hair and is wearing a white lace-trimmed top and a lanyard. The woman on the right has short dark hair and is wearing a dark blue top with a patterned neckline. They are standing in front of a light-colored wall.

SickKids fellow Dr. Olha
Tychkivska (left) and
SickKids neurologist
Dr. Cristina Go

STRONGER TOGETHER

UKRAINE PAEDIATRIC FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
2019 IMPACT REPORT

SickKids **VS** Limits

SICKKIDS SHARES EXPERTISE ON JUNE ADVISORY TRIP TO UKRAINE

FROM JUNE 10-26, 2019, the SickKids advisory team worked with its partners in Ukraine, lecturing, meeting with officials, and sharing its expertise with hospital staff in Kyiv, Odesa, and Lviv.

Much of the work was done in the National Specialized Children's Hospital in Kyiv, known as Okhmatdyt, with whom SickKids partnered last year. There, SickKids Drs. Cristina Go, Eric Bouffet, and James Rutka, as well as Dr. Roman Kizyma (a former observer at SickKids) and Dr. Colin Kazina (a paediatric neurosurgeon from Winnipeg), led case consultations and seminars on everything from epilepsy to neurooncology. Working closely with the SickKids team was Dr. Pavlo Plavskiy, a former observer, whom Okhmatdyt hired to advance its neurosurgery program.

Inspired by the SickKids teaching model, the team's approach was interactive and case-based.

"With each case, you learn how to manage that particular kind of situation, and then you can generalize to others," Dr. Myroslava Romach says of the teaching model.

June's case consultations were also a testament to the incredible progress of Ukrainian doctors. Before, Dr. Rutka was heavily involved in each surgery. In June, he observed and advised, intervening only when necessary.

Because of these consultations and seminars, Dr. Romach says that Okhmatdyt doctors are now doing complicated, often lifesaving surgeries for the first time.

But it wasn't only SickKids doctors sharing their expertise. SickKids Foundation's Ted Garrard, CEO, and Nancy Horvath, Director of Major Gifts, led a two-day fundraising workshop, which covered everything from the role of branding in marketing to building a strong case for support.

Looking ahead, Okhmatdyt wants to improve and expand its neurooncology capacity. Helping them will be Drs. Kizyma, Rutka, and Bouffet, who is already doing monthly Skype-based case conferences with the team. However, Dr. Romach



(Left to right) Drs. Colin Kazina, Eric Bouffet, Myroslava Romach, Cristina Go, and James Rutka on the June 2019 advisory trip to Ukraine

says that improvements in neurosurgery must be paired with improvements in pathology and diagnostics.

"You need to know what type of tumour you've got," Dr. Romach says. "Because if you don't know, you don't know how to treat it appropriately."

To do that will require more advisory visits, more observerships, and more work. But Okhmatdyt is up to the challenge—and so is SickKids.

SICKKIDS WELCOMES NEW UKRAINIAN OBSERVERS

On October 13, 2019, SickKids welcomed four new observers from Ukraine. Here, they'll learn from clinicians at the top of their field. When they return home, they'll bring SickKids expertise with them. They are:

- Dr. Yuriy Chomolyak (Neurosurgery), Uzhhorod National University
- Oles Semanyuk (Ear, Nose, and Throat), Lviv Regional Children's Specialized Clinical Hospital
- Zoryana Ivanyuk (Anaesthesia), Lviv Regional Children's Specialized Clinical Hospital
- Daria Kostiukova (Neonatal Neurology), Okhmatdyt

DR. RUTKA WINS PRESTIGIOUS CUSHING MEDAL

On April 16, 2019, at the annual American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) in San Diego, Dr. James Rutka was awarded the Cushing Medal. Named after Dr. Harvey Cushing, who founded neurosurgery as a specialty in 1919, the award is the highest honour AANS can bestow on a member.

Dr. Rutka, the second Canadian in history to receive the award, was honoured not just for his clinical and research excellence, but his role as a mentor and teacher—in Canada, Ukraine, and across the world.

“Receiving the Cushing Medal from the AANS is one of the greatest honours of my professional career, as it is an organization in which I have worked hard to make a difference these past 30 years,” said Dr. Rutka.

Here at SickKids, we were delighted to see Dr. Rutka win the award. And we are lucky to have him and Dr. Myroslava Romach leading the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program, where Dr. Rutka continues to mentor neurosurgeons, with whom he has worked closely these past seven years.

(Left to right) Drs. Cristina Go, Pavlo Plavskyi, and James Rutka outside Okhmatdyt, Kyiv



BRAINWAVE LITERACY: IMPROVING PATIENT DIAGNOSIS WITH EEG READINGS

TO TRULY UNDERSTAND what Ukraine was missing, it helps to know a bit about electroencephalograms, or EEGs, tests that measure patterns of electricity in the brain. For neurologists, they're essential.

When working with kids with seizures, “EEG is actually the first step,” explains Dr. Cristina Go, SickKids neurologist. “Based on EEG, we can see if the medication is correct, if there is a syndrome that corresponds to the seizure type.”

During Soviet rule, up-to-date EEG treatment protocols and essential equipment were hard, if not impossible, to come by. Now, doctors have better access to both, but few, if any, mentors to guide them.

But, thanks to the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program, that's changing. And Dr. Olha Tychkivska, a paediatrician at Lviv City Children's Clinical Hospital, deserves much of the credit.

Dr. Tychkivska's first contact with SickKids was in 2015, when she was working as a translator for the visiting neurology team that helped develop her EEG methodology.

In 2017, Dr. Tychkivska reunited with the SickKids team in Toronto, where she completed a one-month observership in neurology. Later that year, Dr. Go came to Ukraine for the first time, armed with lectures devoted to neonatal neurology and EEG. For Dr. Tychkivska, this

guidance was nothing short of revelatory.

“I was trained to interpret EEGs, but I didn't have anyone to tell me when I was wrong or right,” says Dr. Tychkivska.

Since that first visit, Dr. Go has returned to Ukraine six times. With each visit, she has worked closely with Dr. Tychkivska, trying to improve readings and standardize treatment. (The donation of advanced, 24-hour video monitoring equipment to Lviv City Children's Clinical Hospital has also helped move the field forward.)

But true, lasting change requires more than advisory visits. Which is why Dr. Tychkivska wanted to return to SickKids for a full, year-long fellowship.

Now, she has her wish. Dr. Tychkivska started her fellowship in July and is fully immersed in the day-to-day work of neurology at SickKids, including exposure to a high volume of diverse cases.

“With every case, you see something new, something different,” says Dr. Tychkivska.

When she returns home, Dr. Tychkivska must complete six months of technical training in neurodiagnostics. Once finished, she can help standardize protocols and improve care. She can be what Dr. Go has been to her: a teacher and mentor.

See cover for a photo of Drs. Tychkivska and Go at SickKids

THANK YOU

Every day, SickKids works 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 the best possible health outcomes for children around the world so they can live longer, healthier lives. Thank you for your remarkable generosity.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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