



EPA GAINING EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME REPORT

On the observership at the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, University of Bern

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REPORT:

My observership at the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, University of Bern, was an incredibly enriching and fulfilling experience. It was made possible thanks to the invaluable support of Dr Thomas Koenig, who played a key role in ensuring I could make the most of my stay by providing continuous guidance and encouragement. From the outset, Dr Koenig was deeply invested in facilitating my experience, maintaining regular contact with me and actively introducing me to a diverse range of researchers and professionals. His efforts enabled me to immerse myself fully in both the scientific and clinical dimensions of psychiatry, broadening my understanding of different approaches and methodologies in the field.

During my time at the University of Bern, I had the unique opportunity to divide my schedule between research and clinical practice, which allowed me to gain a well-rounded perspective on psychiatric care. On the research side, I engaged with experts involved in pioneering projects, gaining first-hand insight into cutting-edge studies and the methodologies used in different contexts. This exposure not only expanded my knowledge of psychiatric research but also encouraged me to reflect on how I could integrate new techniques and findings into my own work. The exchange of ideas with researchers from different backgrounds was particularly stimulating, as it exposed me to diverse perspectives on mental health.

On the clinical side, I had the opportunity to attend clinical meetings and follow the daily routine of doctors working in inpatient units. Observing patient interactions, treatment discussions, and multidisciplinary approaches gave me new insights into psychiatric practices and patient management. It was particularly interesting to see how psychiatry is practiced in a different healthcare system, where resources, funding, and overall structures differ significantly from those in my home country. This comparison allowed me to reflect on both the strengths and challenges of different systems and consider potential improvements in my own practice.

Additionally, one of the key areas I gained new knowledge in was EEG (electroencephalography). Prior to this observership, I had limited exposure to EEG in clinical practice. However, during my time at the hosting institution, I had the opportunity to observe and learn about its use in psychiatry – not only in clinical settings but also in its wider applications in research.

The city of Bern itself added a unique charm to my stay. It is a small, peaceful city that offers a sense of tranquillity, making it a pleasure to live and work in. It feels incredibly safe, and I greatly enjoyed



strolling through its medieval streets, which are steeped in history and character. The picturesque views of the Alps were truly a highlight, providing a beautiful backdrop to my daily activities and moments of relaxation.

From the very beginning, I felt warmly welcomed. The staff members were supportive and open to discussion, fostering a highly collaborative and engaging atmosphere. I had the chance to interact with a wide range of professionals, including researchers, clinicians, and academics, each of whom contributed to my learning in meaningful ways. The frequent intellectual exchanges and discussions challenged me to think critically and broaden my perspectives, reinforcing the value of interdisciplinary collaboration.

This observership has been an eye-opening and deeply enriching opportunity, allowing me to refine my understanding of psychiatry, gain valuable clinical and research insights, and develop a more global perspective on mental health care. It has strengthened my appreciation for different healthcare systems and research approaches, providing me with fresh ideas.

Overall, this experience has been profoundly beneficial for both my professional and personal growth. It has equipped me with new knowledge, diverse perspectives, and valuable connections that will undoubtedly influence my career moving forward. I am grateful for this opportunity and look forward to sharing my learnings with colleagues at my home institution. This observership has reaffirmed my passion for international collaboration and has further motivated me to explore diverse approaches to psychiatric care.