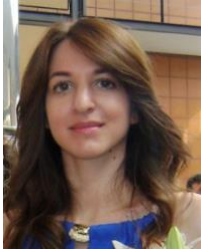




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Name: Pinelopi Arvaniti

Project title: Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) in autoimmune hepatitis (AIH): how does metabolic liver injury affect immune response and disease progression?

Duration	6 months
Short Bio	Working as a PhD student and consultant in the Department of Medicine and Research Laboratory of Internal Medicine, Expertise Center of Greece in Autoimmune Liver Diseases, under the surveillance of prof. G.N Dalekos and prof. K. Zachou helped me to develop a special interest for autoimmune liver diseases and especially for AIH. I had the chance to participate in a considerable number of research projects and become familiar with laboratory techniques such as indirect immunofluorescence, western blotting and Elisa, currently used for the diagnosis of autoimmune liver diseases in the everyday clinical practice, but also with advanced techniques such as DNA methylation Elisa and PCR as part of my thesis. I decided to apply for this research fellowship so as to gain the opportunity to work in worldwide known reference center in autoimmune liver diseases, meet experts on the field and become familiar with advanced laboratory techniques that will help me and my institution produce scientific work of high merit in the field of autoimmune liver disease.
Home Institution	Department of Medicine and Research Laboratory of Internal Medicine, Expertise Center in Autoimmune Liver Diseases, University Hospital of Larissa, Greece.
Host Institution	Liver Unit, Hospital Clínic of Barcelona. IDIBAPS. University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain.

Project Description	<p>The prevalence of NAFLD in AIH patients approximates 17%. However, the question “Are AIH and NAFLD purely coincident; or do these two entities influence each other?” has not yet been answered. The aim of this project is to define the immunological and transcriptomic determinants that affect immune response and play a central role in the pathogenesis of AIH/NAFLD variant. This is a prospective, study which will enroll patients with AIH, NAFLD and AIH/NAFLD variant. The simultaneous interrogation of blood and liver tissue will provide us the opportunity to identify the key cellular and molecular drivers that characterize AIH/NAFLD variant.</p>
Personal Statement	<p>Following this research project enabled me to become familiar with new research protocols and advanced laboratory techniques, such as conventional and Spectral Flow Cytometry that are totally necessary for the investigation of the pathogenesis of autoimmune liver diseases and that represented a totally new and challenging field for me. In addition, it gave me the chance to expand my clinical skills on the diagnosis and management of autoimmune liver diseases, working in a worldwide known institution for its contribution to the clinical investigation of autoimmune liver diseases and guided from experienced professionals on the field. Moreover, as Hospital Clinic is not just a reference center for autoimmune liver diseases in Europe, but also a liver transplant center, this fellowship was a unique opportunity for me to expand my knowledge on the diagnosis and follow up of autoimmune liver diseases in transplanted patients, a topic that is not applicable in my home institution. Moreover, during my research stay I participated in several clinical and research protocols, some of them with international collaborations, a fact that gave the chance to meet experts on the field of autoimmune liver diseases, gain a lot of experience in the analysis and presentation of scientific data, and most importantly present my work in international meetings.</p>