

Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Report

STSM details

Title	Chronic Hand Eczema School
Participant	Giulia Gasparini, Italy
Host	Prof. Dr. med. Swen Malte John, iDerm - Institut für interdisziplinäre Dermatologische Prävention und Rehabilitation, Osnabrück, Germany
Period	4 – 10 December 2016

Background

Dr. Rosella Gallo and I are trying to develop a "healthy hands program" for healthcare personnel in our hospital, San Martino University Hospital in Genoa, Italy. In particular we would like to develop a good protocol for the primary prevention of chronic hand eczema for nursing students. Chronic hand eczema represents a great issue for healthcare personnel in our hospital. At present, our nurses only attend courses on hand hygiene. Our goal is to integrate this with a good healthy skin program without interfering with the needs of disinfection, particularly in surgical and intensive care units. This program might then be spread to other Italian hospitals.

My STSM at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Dermatological Prevention and Rehabilitation at the University of Osnabrück (iDerm) was an excellent opportunity to help us develop our project by learning how to design educational seminars, to prepare educational material for patients, and to perform individual counseling on occupational skin diseases prevention.

Aim of the STSM

The aims of this STSM were to:

- Learn how to develop educational seminars on chronic hand eczema prevention, in particular:
 - Which topics should be addressed during the seminars
 - How many teaching hours are needed
 - Which is the ideal number of participants

- How to conduct interactive seminars
- Learn how to prepare educational material for seminar participants (e.g. power point presentations, visual aids, leaflets, handouts, etc.)
- Learn what products should be used for hand eczema prevention (both for hand hygiene and for hand protection, including barrier creams, emollients creams and gloves, also in special cases where type I or type IV allergies are already present)
- Observe how patients with occupational skin diseases are managed
- Strengthen the collaboration with the host institution (iDerm)

Work carried out during the STSM

During my five-day STSM at iDerm in Osnabrück, I got a complete overview of the educational activities and treatments for both inpatients and outpatients with occupational skin diseases.

I participated in various educational activities for patients, namely educational skin protection seminars, individual counselling on protective gloves and occupational therapy.

I joined all four seminars on skin protection held for the inpatients during their three-week-stay in the iDerm clinic. These seminars were held by health education specialists especially trained in knowledge transfer / healthcare settings and focus on patients with occupational skin diseases.

The *skin protection seminars* were divided into four parts:

- *Part I* was the welcoming seminar for new in-patients and focused on orientation and legal aspects of occupational skin diseases.
- *Part II* focused on explaining the structure and function of the skin using visual aids such as the 3D skin model / 3D brick model and educational film material. Furthermore, external risk factors for hand eczema at the workplace and during leisure time and as well as internal risk factors (atopic dermatitis, hyperhidrosis, psoriasis) were presented in this part.
- *Part III* addressed work related dermatitis, such as acute and chronic irritant contact dermatitis and allergic contact dermatitis. Practical exercises and experiments were organized for patients (e.g. separating barrier creams from emollient creams and from products which should be avoided because potentially irritant or containing common allergens). Recommendations for prevention, skin protection, skin care and skin cleansing were given.
- *Part IV* is the so-called “booster (refresher) seminar” aimed at helping patients to review what they learned in the past weeks.

Along with the lectures, patients were provided with educational material for further reference and a booklet summarizing all topics addressed during the seminars. A shorter and summarized version of the seminars is also used for individual counselling for outpatients.

Individual counselling on protective gloves aims at choosing proper types of protective gloves to suit the patients’ needs at work and at home. This activity is also per-

formed by iDerm's health education specialists and it is provided both for inpatients and outpatients.

Ergo-therapy or occupational therapy is similar to individual counseling with a more practical approach. Patients actually test the gloves chosen during individual counselling in a simulated work setting, for example by handling work tools, and receive feedback from an occupational therapist, who has specific experience in the field of occupational skin diseases, whether the selected gloves are suitable for their work.

Furthermore, I observed the management of inpatients and outpatients with occupational skin diseases, including dermatological examinations, allergological assessments, such as prick testing, patch testing, treatment and legal evaluation.

Main results obtained

The main results of my STSM are:

- I learned how an educational seminar for skin protection should be structured and organized and which kind of learning material can be used.
- I learned how to perform individual counseling for patients with occupational skin diseases.
- The importance of a multidisciplinary approach to this type of skin diseases and also of an individual and tailored approach in the management these patients.

Future collaboration with the host institution

Hopefully this project will set the basis for future collaboration between San Martino University Hospital and iDerm to implement primary and secondary occupational skin diseases prevention programs in Genoa.

Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM

- To develop a protocol for primary prevention of hand eczema in healthcare workers of San Martino University Hospital, Genoa, Italy.
- Spread this protocol to other Italian hospitals.
- The creation of the basis for a case control study on the usefulness of mindfulness based behavioral change interventions to improve chronic hand eczema in healthcare personnel.

Other comments

The iDerm team Osnabrück prepared an excellent schedule for my STSM and was extremely friendly and kind.

I really would like to thank Prof. Dr. med. Swen Malte John, Dr. med. Richard Brans and the whole iDerm team for supporting this STSM, as well as the COST Action StanDerm for making this exchange possible.

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January 7, 2017*