

14.07.2017

I was lucky to attend the 30th Residential Summer Course in Epidemiology, as part of the European Educational Programme in Epidemiology which was held in Florence, Italy between June 19-30, 2017. My participation was funded by Norwegian Research School in Global Health (NRS GH) which helped me to cover all course related expenses.

The summer course aim was to improve and enhance current knowledge in epidemiology and statistics for PhD students, working in the field of health. The course structure was incredibly effective as provided mix of lectures and computer practical sessions. The course's teaching and learning methodology ensured an optimal experience with the learning by doing approach, starting with sessions oriented on the basics of epidemiology and statistics, such as fundamental concepts: confidence intervals, interpretation of p-value, study designs, approaches to research, etc. These followed by sessions from more advance topics such as likelihood theory, investigate confounding, effect modification, Direct Acrylic Graphs (DAG) application in the process of analyzing, etc. Reasonable to highlight that statistical package STATA was used throughout entire course, added much more value to the course. All theoretical sessions were continued with the practical works in small groups during which course participants were asked to discuss and solve problems which were derived from real research data and required to apply in practice the theory to analysis epidemiological and statistical questions with the STATA. Analyses included working on risks, odds and rates as well as a survival analysis and DAG development. Discussion and suggestions about evidence based strategies and epidemiological approaches contributed in the way of improvement of my skills.

Course complemented by lectures, given by distinguished faculty and prominent epidemiologists. These lectures were always followed by lively discussion.

The lecturers and groupmates from the different background and different countries, enriched the days in the summer school with the new network opportunity, contacts, deepening my knowledge and personal experience which additionally made my stay quite pleasurable.

The summer course was most attractive as the topics it covered perfectly matched the spheres of my research within PhD study. Taught lectures focusing on advance epidemiology, statistics and STATA application are core for my doctoral project. All together are the set that equipped me with the essential knowledge for providing quality research in the field of reproductive health.

Overall, my time spent in the 30th Residential Summer Course in Epidemiology was incredibly valuable and experience gained there, among the most important from the perspective of my PhD study.

As my final remark, I would like to recommend Residential Summer Course in Epidemiology to other PhD students and young researchers to benefit with all that advantages offered by course to succeed in their researches and professional career.

Finally, I wanted to drop a note to thank NRS GH for the opportunity given me to attend the 30th Residential Summer Course in Epidemiology.

Thank you all.

Respectfully,

Natia Skhvitaridze, MD, MBA, PhD (c)