August 2017

Report EEPE course 2017, Florence

I had the pleasure and privilege to participate to the EEPE summer course in Florence with the help of NRSGH International Training Grant.

The course is both lecture-based and practical, with workshops in smaller groups in the afternoons. The epidemiology and statistics covered by the course is primarily focused on topics of interest for participants conducting case-control and cohort studies in their research. The statistic methodology is also tailored for this type of research.

The faculty was at a very high level, if not world-class. The lectures were long and in a traditional format that may not be optimal from a pedagogical point of view. However, the quality of the talks was so impressive, that it was ok to sit for hours.

The practical sessions required some proficiency with programming of statistical software. This could a very big challenge for participants not doing this on a regular basis. I was more or less completely lost in the beginning, but gained subsequently enough proficiency do be able to perform basic tasks that will be useful in my research.

The setting for the course couldn't be better. In our spare time, we had enough occasions to meet fellow researchers and do some networking. In this way, we have now included a French researcher from the course. specialized on data management in our project. It was also great to be able to interact with the faculty in a leisurely manner.

I would recommend all participants in the future to have done both statistics and epidemiology courses before applying. This is an advanced course. I am entirely focused on clinical trials, so I lacked much of the theoretical framework and experience needed for deeper understanding of the curriculum. I would recommend the two-week course if you are not primarily focused on epidemiology in your research.

I think I reached my primary objectives to gain a general understanding of epidemiology and learn the STATA software package. Besides this, I had a great time and came home having both new friends and a future colleague.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Nicolas Pejovic