

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to apply for the 3-months EPSRC cruise fellowship.

My name is Francesca Toia, and I am a recently licensed plastic surgeon based in Palermo. I have a specific interest in hand surgery and reconstructive microsurgery, on which I have focused in the last period of my training.

During my plastic surgery residency in Palermo, I enjoyed all my clinical rotations, but I found microsurgery particularly appealing. I was fortunate to be mentored by expert microsurgeons who supervised and supported me both in the microsurgery laboratory and in the operating theater.

To further improve my knowledge, I have participated in several dissection courses on microsurgery and hand surgery, which stimulated my interest for hand and trauma surgery.

To complete my training, I have completed two fellowships at the "St Andrew's center for Plastic Surgery and Burns" in Chelmsford, UK, and at the "Clinica Cavadas" in Valencia, Spain, where I had a high volume exposure to hand traumas and complex reconstructive microsurgery procedures.

My application to the EPSRC cruise fellowship is motivated by my persistent will to improve my skills by widening my horizons in hand surgery and to consolidate professional relationships and establish future clinical and scientific collaborations. EPSRC has provided me in the last years as a member a unique opportunity of doing this that I want to exploit as much as possible.

As a young plastic surgeon, I believe that this fellowship would be a great educational opportunity, as it would allow me to visit three world-renowned plastic surgery centers, in which clinical excellence is merged with translational and clinical research.

The centers I have chosen are three internationally renowned centers based in Switzerland, Italy and Sweden, with a fourth alternative choice based in Germany:

- 1) Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. University Hospital. Zurich, Switzerland (EPSRC member: Dr. Nicole Lindenblatt)
- 2) UOSD Microchirurgia. Az. Sanitaria Città della salute e della Scienza di Torino. Torino, Italy (EPSRC member: Dr Pierluigi Tos)
- 3) Institute for Clinical Sciences. Sahlgrenska University Hospital. Goteborg, Sweden. (EPSRC member: Dr Giovanni Maltese)
- 4) Department of Plastic, Hand and Reconstructive Surgery. Berufsgenossenschaftliche Unfallklinik. Ludwigshafen, Germany (EPSRC members: Dr Cristoph Hirche, Dr Holger Engel, Dr Leila Kolios)

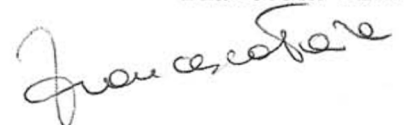
I believe that also the geographic distribution could be helpful in expanding an international web of cooperations within Europe.

I am confident that this fellowship would provide me exposure to a wide variety of pathologies, including both elective and trauma surgery, and to specialized fields as nerve surgery, brachial plexus injuries and trauma sequelae.

Thank you for considering my application for the EPSRC cruise fellowship.

Sincerely,

Francesca Toia



Sponsor: Dr Salvatore D'Arpa

Referees: Dr Pierluigi Tos, Dr Giovanni Maltese