SEMINAR REPORT

CARDIAC SURGERY

October 30 – November 5, 2022

A Global Educational Initiative by the American Austrian Foundation
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SALZBURG CLEVELAND CLINIC SEMINAR IN CARDIAC SURGERY

October 30 – November 5, 2022

| 33 fellows from 19 different countries |
| 8 faculty members from the USA and Austria |
| 19 lectures given by faculty |
| 32 interesting case presentations by fellows |
| 8 excellent case presentations by fellows |

Group Photo of Faculty and Fellows
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Sunday, October 30</th>
<th>Monday, November 1</th>
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**Monday, November 1**
- **8:00** - **9:00**: Introductions Pre-Seminar Test
  - Edward G. Soltesz, MD, MPH
- **9:00** - **10:00**: Foundations of CV Physiology
  - Nikolaos J. Skubas, MD, DSc, FASE, FACC
- **10:30**: COFFEE BREAK
- **10:30** - **11:30**: Myocardial Revascularization: CABG vs. PCI
  - Michael Zhen-Yu Tong, MD
- **11:30** - **12:30**: Pathophysiology and Indications for MV Surgery
  - Michael Zhen-Yu Tong, MD
- **13:00** - **14:00**: LUNCH
- **14:00** - **15:00**: Wet Lab: Heart Dissection with TEE Correlation
  - Nikolaos J. Skubas, MD, DSc, FASE, FACC
  - Edward G. Soltesz, MD, MPH
  - Michael Zhen-Yu Tong, MD
- **15:00** - **16:00**: Workshop Fellows' Case Presentations
  - Vincent Tobin, BS, CCP
- **16:00** - **17:00**: Free Afternoon
- **17:00** - **17:15**: OMI Presentation

**Tuesday, November 2**
- **8:00** - **9:00**: Cardiac Anesthesia and Monitoring: A Primer for CT Surgeon
  - Nikolaos J. Skubas, MD, DSc, FASE, FACC
- **9:00** - **10:00**: Acute Aortic Syndromes
  - Edward G. Soltesz, MD, MPH
- **10:00** - **10:30**: COFFEE BREAK
- **10:30** - **11:30**: Complications of Mitral Valve Surgery
  - Alfred Kocher, MD
- **11:30** - **12:30**: CABG Complications
  - Edward G. Soltesz, MD, MPH
- **12:30** - **13:00**: LUNCH
- **13:00** - **14:00**: Workshop Fellows' Case Presentations
  - Vincent Tobin, BS, CCP
- **14:00** - **15:00**: Free Afternoon
- **15:00** - **17:00**: CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT
  - Marek P. Ehrlich, MD

**Wednesday, November 2**
- **8:00** - **9:00**: Principles of Myocardial Preservation
  - Vincent Tobin, BS, CCP
- **9:00** - **10:00**: Modern Perfusion Techniques and Emergencies
  - Vincent Tobin, BS, CCP
- **10:00** - **10:30**: COFFEE BREAK
- **10:30** - **11:30**: Guidelines for Aortic Valve Procedures
  - Guenther Laufer, MD
- **11:30** - **12:30**: Surgery for Acute MI Complications
  - Guenther Laufer, MD
- **12:30** - **13:00**: LUNCH
- **13:00** - **14:00**: OMI Presentation
- **14:00** - **15:00**: Workshop Fellows' Case Presentations
  - Marek P. Ehrlich, MD
- **15:00** - **16:00**: Free Afternoon
- **16:00** - **17:00**: COFFEE BREAK

**Thursday, November 3**
- **8:00** - **9:00**: Selection of Heart Valve Prosthesis
  - Guenther Laufer, MD
- **9:00** - **10:00**: Surgery for Atrial Arrhythmias
  - Marek P. Ehrlich, MD
- **10:00** - **10:30**: COFFEE BREAK
- **10:30** - **11:30**: Ascending Aorta Surgery: Tips and Tricks
  - Guenther Laufer, MD
- **11:30** - **12:30**: Surgery for Acute MI Complications
  - Marek P. Ehrlich, MD
- **12:30** - **13:00**: LUNCH
- **13:00** - **14:00**: Workshop Fellows' Case Presentations
  - Marek P. Ehrlich, MD
- **14:00** - **15:00**: Free Afternoon
- **15:00** - **16:00**: COFFEE BREAK

**Friday, November 4**
- **8:00** - **9:00**: SAVR vs. TAVR
  - Guenther Laufer, MD
- **9:00** - **10:00**: Guidelines for Aortic Valve Procedures
  - Guenther Laufer, MD
- **10:00** - **10:30**: COFFEE BREAK
- **10:30** - **11:30**: Ascending Aorta Surgery: Tips and Tricks
  - Guenther Laufer, MD
- **11:30** - **12:30**: Surgery for Acute MI Complications
  - Guenther Laufer, MD
- **12:30** - **13:00**: LUNCH
- **13:00** - **14:00**: Workshop Fellows' Case Presentations
  - Marek P. Ehrlich, MD
- **14:00** - **15:00**: Free Afternoon
- **15:00** - **16:00**: COFFEE BREAK

**Saturday, November 5**
- **8:00** - **9:00**: Breakthroughs in Cardiovascular Surgery
  - Michael Zhen-Yu Tong, MD
- **9:00** - **10:00**: Advanced Techniques in Cardiac Surgery
  - Edward G. Soltesz, MD, MPH
- **10:00** - **10:30**: COFFEE BREAK
- **10:30** - **11:30**: Post-Seminar Test Evaluation & Discussion
  - Edward G. Soltesz, MD, MPH
- **11:30** - **12:00**: GRADUATION DINNER
  - Certificates Awarded
FACULTY BOOKLET

CARDIAC SURGERY SEMINAR IN SALZBURG

October 30 – November 5, 2022

A Global Educational Initiative by the American Austrian Foundation
Wolfgang Aulitzky, MD

Director, Open Medical Institute  
American Austrian Foundation

Associate Dean and Gerhard Andlinger Professor for International Medicine & Distance Learning  
Adjunct Professor of Clinical Urology  
Adjunct Professor of Clinical Reproductive Medicine  
Weill Medical College of Cornell University

Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics  
Perelman School of Medicine at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Associate Professor of Urology  
Medical University of Innsbruck, Austria

Wolfgang Aulitzky, MD is the Medical Director of the American Austrian Foundation. He is Associate Dean for International Medicine and Distance Learning, Adjunct Prof. of Clinical Urology and Adjunct Prof. of Clinical Reproductive Medicine at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University/New York Presbyterian Hospital. In 2016, he was appointed Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics in the Associated Faculty of the Perelman School of Medicine at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. He is also Associate Prof. of Urology at the Medical University of Innsbruck and Visiting Professor at the Medical University of Vienna. Amongst others he is a member of the American, German and Austrian Societies of Urology and was awarded the Zuckerkandlpreis of the Austrian Society of Urology in 1989. In 1995 he received the Silver Medal, in 2007 the Golden Medal for Merits to the Republic of Austria and in 2014 the cross of honor of the Land Salzburg. As Director of the Medical Program of the American Austrian Foundation he has initiated the Open Medical Institute, a scientific and educational collaboration of Weill Cornell and the NewYork Presbyterian Hospital, the Children Hospital of Philadelphia, Duke University, Columbia University, the Cleveland Clinic and leading hospitals in Austria. Dr. Aulitzky earned his medical degree at the University of Innsbruck in 1977, was a research associate at the University of Uppsala, Sweden and the Rockefeller University, New York. He received his training as an urologist at the University of Innsbruck and the General Hospital of Salzburg. He is the author of more than 140 publications on Urology, Andrology and Health Care issues and is co-author of books on basic and clinical urology/andrology.
Edward G. Soltesz, MD, MPH
(Course Director)

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Edward G. Soltesz, MD, MPH is the Donna and Ken Lewis Endowed Chair in Cardiothoracic Surgery and the Surgical Director of the Kaufman Center for Heart Failure and Recovery. In this role, he oversees all heart transplant and mechanical support for the Cleveland Clinic. He is also the Director of Cardiac Surgery Affiliate Programs where he works collaboratively to improve hospital performance and provide strategic advice about cutting-edge, efficient and cost conscious healthcare to hospital programs throughout the world. Dr. Soltesz specializes in adult cardiac surgery, minimally invasive cardiac surgery, valve repair and replacement, endovascular aortic surgery, percutaneous approaches to valve replacement, and complex re-operative heart surgery and heart transplant and mechanical support. A native of Cleveland, Dr. Soltesz graduated as valedictorian of St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland and received a full academic scholarship to the College of the Holy Cross. There, he obtained degrees in both Classics and Chemistry, was awarded the British Marshall Scholarship, and graduated summa cum laude as the class valedictorian. Dr. Soltesz then went on to receive his medical degree from Harvard Medical School where he was awarded the Harvard National Scholarship. Dr. Soltesz stayed at Harvard to complete his residences in general surgery and cardiothoracic surgery at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. He was awarded the Mannick Research Award for his NIH-funded research in cardiothoracic imaging. During this time at Harvard, Dr. Soltesz also earned a Master of Public Health from Harvard School of Public Health with a focus on clinical effectiveness. Dr. Soltesz then returned to Cleveland to complete an additional fellowship in complex aortic and endovascular surgery at the Cleveland Clinic where he was subsequently appointed to the Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery in 2008. Dr. Soltesz’s research program focuses on large-scale assessment of cardiac surgical outcomes from a public health perspective, quality improvement and safety, clinical outcomes of valve surgery, and heart failure. He is widely published in the areas of minimally invasive surgery, cardiac surgical outcomes, heart failure, and optical imaging in cardiac surgery, and has papers in The New England Journal of Medicine, Lancet, Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, and Annals of Thoracic Surgery. He has lectured and served as a visiting professor both nationally and internationally.
Nikolaos J. Skubas, MD, DSc, FASE, FACC
(Co-Course Director)

Chair
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Nikolaos J. Skubas, MD, DSc, FASE, FACC is a cardiovascular and thoracic anesthesiologist, who is also specialized in transesophageal echocardiography. Dr. Skubas grew up in Greece and completed his undergraduate studies at Aristoteles University School of Medicine in Thessaloniki, Greece. He completed his anesthesiology residency at University Hospitals (Case Western Reserve University) in Cleveland. His fellowship training in cardiothoracic anesthesia was at Barnes-Jewish Hospital (Washington University in St Louis). Dr. Skubas’ research interests include clinical applications of perioperative ultrasound and transesophageal echocardiography. Recent publications include research on transcatheter aortic valve and ventricular physiology. He has been a co-author of AHA and ASE Practice Guidelines, most recently on TEE use for surgical decision making. He is the Executive Section Editor on Perioperative Transesophageal Echocardiography and Cardiovascular Education in Anesthesia and Analgesia, the official journal of the Society of Cardiovascular Anesthesiologists, and an associate Editor in Anesthesiology. He is a Board Director of National Board of Echocardiography and chairs the writing committee for Basic Perioperative TEE examination. Dr. Skubas is the Chair of Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology at Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio and Professor of Anesthesiology at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University. He lives in Cleveland with his wife and their three children. He loves to travel, cook and is an avid fiction and graphic novel reader.
Guenther Laufer, MD  
(Co-Course Director)

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Guenther Laufer, MD is currently the Director of the Department of Cardiac Surgery at the University of Vienna, a position that he has held since 2009. Dr. Laufer graduated from the Medical University of Vienna in 1982, where he also went on to complete his residency in surgery in 1989. From 1992 to 2000, he was the program director of the Heart and Heart-Lung Transplant Program at the University of Vienna before moving to Innsbruck to become a professor and the Chief of the Department of Cardiac Surgery at the University of Innsbruck (2000 - 2009). Dr. Laufer is also a member of several professional associations. He is a member of the Eurotransplant International Foundation (ETI), the Eurotransplant Thoracic Advisory Committee (ThAC) (which he has chaired since 2000), and he has been a board member of the Austrian Society for Surgery since 2002. Additionally, he served as the President of the Austrian Society of Surgery from 2006 to 2008, and is currently the chairperson of the Eurotransplant Assembly.
Marek P. Ehrlich, MD

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Marek P. Ehrlich, MD is a native of Austria, and studied medicine at the University of Vienna. He completed his medical training as a resident in general surgery and cardiac surgery at the University Hospital in Vienna and held a fellowship as a postdoctoral chief research fellow at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York. Dr. Ehrlich is currently an Associate Professor of Cardiac Surgery, attending physician and Director of the Aortic as well as Atrial Fibrillation Program at the University of Vienna. His surgical portfolio involves a full spectrum of cardiac as well as vascular procedures including thoracoabdominal repair and minimal invasive aortic and mitral valve repair. He is also performing all sorts of ablation procedures for atrial fibrillation. His total number of surgical operations exceeds 2500 cases including electrophysiological interventions such as pacemaker and defibrillator implantations. Dr. Ehrlich’s research interests have included experimental studies concerning cerebral protection in an animal model. His current research interests include surface mapping in atrial fibrillation as well as new anastomotic devices for aortic aneurysms and dissections. He filed a patent on that new device and is CEO of the start-up company Aortic Intervention. Moreover, Dr. Ehrlich has served as a faculty member in several international symposia, is AATS and ISMICS member and reviewer of the Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, Circulation and the Annals of Thoracic Surgery. Furthermore, he is the organizer of the “VISAR” symposium which takes place biannually in Vienna. Dr. Ehrlich is the author and coauthor of over 200 articles, abstracts and book chapters published in leading scientific journals.
Alfred Kocher, MD

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Alfred Kocher, MD is a cardiac surgeon who covers the entire spectrum of adult cardiac surgery ranging from coronary artery bypass grafting to cardiac transplantation. He specializes in surgical treatment of heart valve disease with a focus on the ROSS procedure, Tirone David operation and novel heart valve devices. Dr. Kocher graduated from Vienna University School of Medicine and completed his surgical residency at the Medical University of Vienna. His fellowship training was at the General Hospital in Vienna with Prof. Wolner and at the Silesian University in Zabrze/Poland with Prof. Zembala. He spent 4 years as attending in cardiac surgery at the University of Innsbruck in Tyrol. Dr. Kocher's research interests include cardiac transplantation, myocardial regeneration by the use of stem cells and clinical trials testing novel devices for heart valve repair and replacement. He has been to Stanford University in 1996 to study heterotopic cardiac transplantation in a rodent model and went to Columbia University in New York where he spent 2 ½ years on stem cell research. His publication on "improvement of myocardial function after infarction by application of CD34+ stem cells" has become a citation classic. Recent publications include a report on a multicenter trial with a rapid deployment aortic valve replacement system in the Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery. He is a peer reviewer for multiple major surgical journals. Dr. Kocher's research efforts have earned him several grants and prizes. In 2015, Dr. Kocher received the OMI-Award for his dedication as a long-time mentor who has donated his time, expertise and energy to OMI Observers. Dr. Kocher is currently on the faculty of the Department of Cardiac Surgery at the Medical University Vienna as Associate Professor of Surgery. He lives in Vienna with his daughters Valentina and Sophia.
Vincent Tobin, BS, CCP is a staff cardiovascular perfusionist at Cleveland Clinic. Mr. Tobin graduated from The Catholic University of America in Washington DC with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. His perfusion training was completed through Cleveland Clinic School of Cardiovascular Perfusion. In addition to his clinical responsibilities, Mr. Tobin is a didactic and clinical instructor for Cleveland Clinic School of Cardiovascular Perfusion. He has lectured both in the United States and in Chile. Mr. Tobin resides in Westlake, OH with his wife, Michelle and his children Emilie, Maggie, and Connor. His outside interests include both playing soccer and coaching his children's soccer teams.
Michael Zhen-Yu Tong, MD

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Cardiac Transplantation and Mechanical Circulatory Support
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Michael Zhen-Yu Tong, MD is Director of Cardiac Transplantation and Mechanical Circulatory Support and a staff cardiac surgeon in the Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery in the Sydell and Arnold Miller Family Heart, Vascular & Thoracic Institute. Specialty Interests: Complex cardiac disease, Ventricular assist devices, Heart transplantation, Aortic surgery, Endovascular and hybrid aortic surgery, Aortic root and valve sparing root operations, Complex valvular disease, Coronary artery disease including total arterial revascularization, Surgical cardiomyopathy, Complex redo operations, Minimally invasive cardiac operations, chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension (CTEPH), pulmonary embolism. Number of Procedures Performed: Cleveland Clinic performs more than 4,000 heart surgeries each year. All Cleveland Clinic cardiac surgeons complete between 300-400 cardiac cases per year. Dr. Tong performs around 350 cardiac cases annually including over 20 heart transplants, 30 ventricular assist devices, 60 aortic operations, 25 pulmonary endarterectomies and over 100 redo operations. Education and Training: Dr. Tong received his doctorate in medicine from McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He served his residency in cardiac surgery at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada, and was Chief Resident in his final year of training. During his residency he also completed a Master’s of Business Administration within the health sector stream at the Richard Ivey School of Business, London, Ontario. Dr. Tong completed his postdoctoral training as a Clinical Associate at Cleveland Clinic in surgical heart failure and aortic surgery. He was named to the Cleveland Clinic staff in 2014. Publications and Speaking: Dr. Tong has authored or coauthored articles in peer-reviewed cardiovascular surgery journals and has coauthored a medical textbook with Cleveland Clinic Heart, Vascular & Thoracic Institute surgeon Lars Svensson, MD, PhD. Dr. Tong has delivered numerous lectures and poster presentations at cardiovascular surgery conferences in the United States, Canada and internationally. Dr. Tong is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada: Cardiac Surgery. His other professional memberships include the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, Canadian Cardiovascular Society, Canadian Society of Cardiac Surgeons and Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society. Leisure Activities: In his leisure time he enjoys skiing, baseball, travel, golf and photography.
Fellow Booklet
Cardiac Surgery

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Sunday, October 30, 2022

While on the train to Salzburg, thoughts about an upcoming busy schedule, meeting world renowned experts in cardiac surgery, and getting answers to issues we face in everyday practice began to shift to Austria, it’s beauty and heritage. During a city tour of Salzburg, I was impressed by the fairy tale atmosphere. At the welcome dinner, Cleveland Clinic staff welcomed us with warm words, ensuring all of us could be confident in approaching them during our stay. I am super excited and prepared all the questions and discussions I want to have with them this week. The organizing committee put a lot of work towards ensuring we have an easy and pleasant stay during the seminar.

Monday, October 31, 2022

During the morning session, it was clear I would have an intensive workweek. Dr. Edward Soltesz gave an opening speech and shared tips on how to get maximum knowledge during
our stay. Dr. Nikolaos Skubas started off the lectures by refreshing our memory in cardiac anesthesiology and physiology. His personal touch was felt by everybody during his presentations, trying to involve everyone with questions and answering with a tailored approach to every situation in our field. I want to stress that Dr. Michael Tong shared his treasured knowledge in a way that was easy to remember, including strategies in treating sick patients. Later, a wet lab dissection with essential TEE skills and surgical tips and pitfalls in performing complex surgeries was awaiting us. All of the faculty members were our teachers and mentors at that time.

**Tuesday, November 1, 2022**

I could not wait for this day. Faculty members presented their views on the most important issues in my field, including high mortality acute aortic syndromes, complex valve interventions, most performed CABG procedures, and more. Their pragmatic and practical approach as well as guidelines application created an important shift in my understanding of who is a successful cardiac surgeon. What does it take to be one? The opportunity to learn, having a trustworthy team, and dedication. Mentoring fellows and future leaders is evident at Schloss Arenberg.

**Wednesday, November 2, 2022**

Today we learned about topics which are very close to our everyday practice. Mr. Tobin shared about his practice and Cleveland Clinic strategies in protecting myocardium. After the presentation, surgeons also added their vision in cardiac protection and the most common pitfalls, mistakes, and emergencies. Later, very important information on MV surgery complications and best surgical techniques in HOCM treatment was presented by well-known surgeon Dr. Alfred Kocher. I gained a lot of confidence in performing MV replacement surgery. We enjoyed our free afternoon. The weather was perfect, and we found a spectacular view from the Salzburg castle.

**Thursday, November 3, 2022**

We continued our journey through important topics on life threatening conditions in cardiac surgery. Mr. Tobin presented a long-awaited discussion regarding perfusion techniques and the most common emergencies. As a result, we can transfer knowledge not only to surgeons but to perfusionists as well. Dr. Ehrlich shared his personal experience that he has gathered over the last 30 years of practice. The afternoon was well packed with various presentations from peers, which was intense. An evening program which included classical music completed our day.

**Friday, November 4, 2022**

Dr. Laufer presented about valve treatment issues and crucial surgical tips. He was open to share his lifelong experience with us, a new generation. While on coffee break, it was clear that the intensive seminar week was coming to an end. I will miss being here, but fellows agreed to meet again in venues like this or at international events. I am taking knowledge, mentors, skills, friends, and warm memories with me from Salzburg to Uzbekistan.
Sunday, October 30, 2022

I arrived at Schloss Arenberg in the afternoon. I travelled from Skopje to Vienna by plane, and then from Vienna to Salzburg by train. After check-in I went up to my room, which I was pleasantly surprised by. Even though I attended the seminar last year, I was very excited for the week and to attend in person. At 7:00 pm we were welcomed by Dr. Wolfgang K. Aulitzky (CEO of the OMI) and by Dr. Soltesz (course director), followed by dinner, during which I was able to meet some of the colleagues that I would be spending the week with. I was happy that I was attending the seminar with my colleague, but I was excited to meet people from countries near Macedonia (such as Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia) as well as people from countries further away.

Monday, October 31, 2022

After breakfast, the first thing on the agenda was the pre-seminar test. Even though I was unsure about some of the questions, I was hopeful that by attending and actively listening I would be able to learn. The topics of the day covered fundamentals in cardiovascular physiology, which was shared from an anesthesiologist’s point of view, Dr. Nikolas Skubas. After that was the lecture about CABG vs. PCI (by Dr. Michael Z-YuTong), which I found extremely interesting and included relevant facts. What I liked most about the day was that in the afternoon we had a wet lab- Heart dissection with TEE correlation, where we got to learn...
and apply some of the echocardiographic principles from earlier in the day on porcine hearts. We also were able to do some valve surgery practice (AVR with bio valve Avalus, MV repair), which for me as surgeon in training was the best part of the seminar. After the wet lab, we had a great OMI presentation from Stephanie Faschang. She talked to us about the OMI program and all the possibilities after attending the seminar. Afterwards, a group of us went for a walk to explore the town.

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

Our lectures for the day were on the topics of cardiac monitoring, acute aortic syndromes, and mitral valve repair and replacement. One of the best topics was the presentation from Dr. Soltesz about CABG complication. In the afternoon, some my fellow colleagues and I had our case presentations. My case presentation was titled “extended septal myectomy for HOCM”. It was interesting to see the experiences and challenging cases other countries are dealing with.

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

We talked about the principles of myocardial preservation with an excellent perfusionist, Dr. Toban. The next topic was the complication of mitral valve surgery, presented by Dr. Kocher from Vienna. Another set of excellent topics followed, HOCM and basics of mechanical cardiac support, which allowed me to get a better understanding of these two topics. In the afternoon, we had free time to walk around the city center and to explore the nearby area. We appreciated seeing the nature and sights of Salzburg.

Thursday, November 3, 2022

Our lectures today were delivered by excellent Austrian faculty. The first lecture was on how to select a heart valve prosthesis with Dr. Laufer from AKH-Vienna. After topics ranging from surgery ablation for AF, surgery of the thoraco-abdominal aorta, and endovascular aortic interventions. For me it was very interesting to hear about their perspective and their experience on these topics. In the afternoon, there was another session of fellow case presentations, and the topics were very interesting and well delivered. After dinner, we had a chamber music concert, and other fellows and I were able to socialize with the faculty and each other in an informal setting.

Friday, November 4, 2022

Our last day was once again filled with very interesting lectures. We heard about how to deal with SAVR and TAVI as well as learned about the guidelines for aortic valve procedures and ascending aorta surgery. After the lectures, we had our post-seminar test. This time, it was easier, and I was able to implement the information I learned during this seminar. I was honored to share my experience with colleagues from other countries and very happy to meet new people. My expectations of the seminar were not only met but exceeded. Listening to the lectures and being able to learn from the faculty was invaluable. I will be implementing all the knowledge acquired here in my practice. Even some areas that I am not very versed in, I am looking forward to maybe expanding in my hospital. Meeting the other fellows and being able to exchange experiences and contact with them is something that I will cherish forever. I was
given the opportunity to gain new friends, extend my professional network with a diverse and multidisciplinary group, further my career, and enjoy the beautiful city of Salzburg. A big thank you to the organizers, without whom all this experience would not have been possible. Thank you, OMI!
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Sunday, October 30, 2022

I travelled to Salzburg by train and arrived just in time for the welcome dinner at Schloss Arenberg. I saw dear colleagues from Macedonia and Croatia that I already knew. It didn't take long before I also met new ones - residents from Slovakia. Despite the exhaustion from travel, I was really happy to discuss cardiac surgery topics with them. I headed to bed early so I could be fresh for tomorrow's lessons. I was delighted to see that my room was nice, comfortable, and clean.

Monday, October 31, 2022

After breakfast, we headed to the lecture hall. First, we had an introduction and the pre-seminar test. Our first lecture was by Dr. Skubas about CV physiology. It was followed by Dr. Tong's lectures on myocardial revascularization and mitral valve surgery. In the afternoon, we had a wet lab that focused on heart dissection with TEE correlation. The wet lab was very interesting and useful. I did an aortic valve replacement in a pig's heart, and it was led by amazing faculty members. It was such an educational day!
Tuesday, November 1, 2022

Our first lecture was by Dr. Skubas and how cardiac anesthesia is a primer for CT surgeon - which I strongly agree with. Later, we enjoyed Dr. Soltesz lessons on acute aortic syndromes, mitral valve surgery, and CABG complications. After lunch, fellows case presentations took place. It was great to listen to those cases as well as the discussion that followed. Young professionals from all over the world presented their most peculiar medical cases, and it was really special to hear.

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

We started with a lecture from Mr. Tobin, cardiac perfusionist. I found the lecture to be very relevant because my knowledge on principles of myocardial preservation wasn't accurate. Afterwards, we had a lecture by Dr. Kocher on complications of mitral valve surgery and HOCM. Later, Dr. Tong gave lecture on the basics of mechanical cardiac support. Today we also had a free afternoon. Even though I have enjoyed the lectures very much, it was nice to have a free afternoon. With my colleagues from the Czech Republic, Belarus, Croatia, and Macedonia, I went to the city center. We enjoyed coffee and incredible Austrian Zotter chocolate. We took memorable group photos in front of Schloss Arenberg.

Thursday, November 3, 2022

The day started with Dr. Laufer’s lecture, which was followed by Mr. Tobin's lesson, and finished with Dr. Ehrlich. Topics included complications of acute MI, surgery for atrial arrhythmias, and endovascular interventions. In the afternoon we had case presentations once again. I presented a case from my hospital about an older patient with congenital heart anomaly and the modalities of treatment. I was bit nervous before my case, but it went well. Dr. Laufer was the chairman of the session and he really made us all feel comfortable and encouraged us to discuss. After dinner, we had a wonderful chamber music concert which I greatly enjoyed.

Friday, November 4, 2022

Today was our last day of the seminar, which was sad but also nice to see all we have accomplished. I was more than excited to listen to the rest of Dr. Laufer's valuable lectures. I want to thank the OMI from the bottom of my heart for this unique opportunity to be surrounded by intellectuals from all over the world: Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Moldova, Macedonia, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uzbekistan. What an enriching experience! I miss my hometown, Sarajevo, but would soon like to visit Salzburg again!