

## EAACI Clinical Fellowship 2024 Final Report

**Name:** Anna Spada

**Project Title:** Drug desensitization: achievement of management skills with focus on biological and chemotherapeutic drugs

**Fellowship Duration:** 02.11.2024 - 31.01.2025 (3 months)

**Host Institution:** Allergy Unit of Regional University Hospital of Malaga, Spain

**Host Supervisor:** Prof. María Josefa Torres Jaén

**Home Institution:** Division of Dermatology and Allergy APSS, Santa Chiara Hospital of Trento, Italy

**Home Supervisor:** Dr. Carla Lombardo

I had the privilege to be selected for the European Academy of Allergy's competitive Clinical Fellowship 2024, which aims to spread the medical specialty of Allergy and Clinical Immunology throughout European countries in order to support the training of highly qualified specialists. With the support of this award, I was allowed to spend three months in the Drug Allergy Unit of Regional University Hospital of Malaga (Spain), a national and worldwide reference center for the investigation and management of drug allergy.

The aim of this fellowship was to broaden my knowledge in drug allergy and especially in desensitization to chemotherapeutic and biological drugs. I chose the Regional University Hospital of Malaga because it is a European reference center for this field, as the Allergy Service has obtained the status of World Center of Excellence from the World Allergy Organization (WAO).

In the last decades, Prof. Torres and his group have led several studies with a large scientific publication record, which have contributed to important advances in the diagnosis and management of allergy to betalactams and other antibiotics, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), radio contrast agents, and many other drugs.

During my stay, I had the opportunity to attend at the Drug Allergy Day Hospital. Clinical activities usually start at 8 am and end around 3 pm; furthermore, depending on the patient's clinical severity and the reactions that occurred during the desensitization protocol, some desensitization schedules may be extended into the afternoon until about 7 pm. A large number of drug provocation tests and desensitization to chemotherapeutic or biological drugs were carried out daily, with an average of 12-15 provocations and 2 desensitization to chemotherapeutic or biologic drugs per day.

This large volume of provocation tests and chemotherapy desensitization allowed me to improve my expertise in defining risk stratification, personalizing challenge tests based on individual patients' profile, optimizing desensitization schedules, and managing adverse reactions to various pharmacological classes. Furthermore, I had the privilege of participating in collegial and multi-disciplinary discussions on complex cases, as well as attending plenary update sessions on topics of interest to allergists, which were routinely held in the institute.

During these months I had the pleasure of working alongside Dr. Doña: her remarkable clinical and research experience in the field allowed me to broaden and enrich my expertise in the management of drug allergies, especially on hypersensitivity reactions to NSAIDs, adapting the challenge test practice to the latest updates available in published research articles.

Knowing the challenges in the management of desensitization to biological and chemotherapeutic drugs, which pathogenesis is not fully understood yet and for which clear guidelines are lacking to date, I strongly believe that the opportunity I had to learn and practice in a world-leading center, used to routinely perform desensitization protocols in a large volume of patients, was a fundamental contribution for my professional

growth. In addition to clinical activities, the Drug Allergy Unit is associated with a Research Laboratory that I had the opportunity to attend. I would like to thank Dr. Mayorga and Dr. Martín for the opportunity they offered me to familiarize myself with in vitro techniques applied to the diagnosis of drug allergy, such as the basophil activation test and the lymphocyte transformation test.

I would like to sincerely thank Prof. María Josefa Torres for the opportunity to attend her Allergy Unit: this experience has been a significant enrichment for my professional development and for my future clinical practice. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the members of her team, especially Dr Doña, Dr Salas, Dr Campos, Dr Posada and Dr Sáenz de Santa María for their warm welcome, their guidance and support during my fellowship. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Allergy Specialist Nurses Esther García Frías and Lola Cañamero Ramírez who always supported and involved me in all activities. I would also like to thank Dr. Carla Lombardi, my supervisor at my home institution, for helping to make this experience possible for me.

Finally, I thank EAACI for this valuable opportunity to grow as a young specialist in allergology and clinical immunology.

I highly recommend this experience to young specialists who wish to improve their clinical and research skills in the field of drug allergy.

I will remember to acknowledge EAACI in any future publication, which could relate to the Fellowship.

Anna Spada

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Spada', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

EAACI Clinical Fellowship 2024 Awardee