

# **EAACI Clinical Fellowship 2025 - Final Report**

**Project Title:** “Mastering Asthma and Severe Asthma”

**Name, Country:** Milica Terzic, Serbia

**Type, Duration, and Location of Fellowship:** Clinical Fellowship, 3 June 2025 - 3 September 2025 (3 months), Rome, Italy

**Host Institution and Supervisor:** Department of Public Health and Infectious Diseases, Policlinico Umberto I, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy - Prof. Matteo Bonini, MD, PhD

## **Introduction**

From June 3 to September 3, 2025, I had the honor of participating in the Clinical Fellowship “Mastering Asthma and Severe Asthma” at Sapienza University of Rome, within the Department of Public Health and Infectious Diseases, Policlinico Umberto I, under the mentorship of Prof. Matteo Bonini, MD, PhD. This program was supported by the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) through a dedicated fellowship grant.

The main aim of the fellowship was to enhance my clinical expertise in asthma and severe asthma, gain hands-on experience with advanced diagnostic and therapeutic protocols, and strengthen my understanding of personalized treatment approaches.

## **Clinical and Educational Activities**

During the fellowship, I observed approximately 400 patients, averaging 30-40 patients per week over 12 weeks. Each workday lasted about 8 hours, resulting in an effective weekly working time of around 40 hours. I actively participated in outpatient clinics daily from 08:00 to 15:00, accompanying patient examinations. Specifically, I followed asthma clinics on Mondays and Wednesdays, severe asthma clinics on Thursdays, interstitial lung disease clinics on Tuesdays, pleural disease clinics on Fridays, which expanded my knowledge of complex respiratory conditions and multidisciplinary management.

Following Prof. Bonini’s clinics allowed me to gain comprehensive insight into the clinical management of asthma and severe asthma, including assessment of disease severity, interpretation of advanced diagnostic tests, treatment planning, and monitoring response to therapy. Prof. Bonini

was always approachable, generous with his time, and eager to explain even the smallest details, ensuring a thorough understanding of complex cases. This experience was invaluable for my professional development, enhancing both my clinical reasoning and my understanding of personalized management strategies in complex respiratory diseases.

I received hands-on training in advanced diagnostic procedures, including spirometry, body plethysmography, diffusing capacity for carbon monoxide (DLCO) testing, multiple-breath washout tests, and Fractional Exhaled Nitric Oxide test (FeNO). By the end of the fellowship, I acquired the skills to perform these assessments independently and interpret their results confidently.

### **Workshops and Seminars**

On June 21, I attended the Fleisher Society educational seminar at Gemelli Hospital, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Rome, on “Imaging and Management of Pulmonary Fibrosis.” This experience enriched my understanding of diagnostic imaging and therapeutic strategies for complex interstitial lung diseases, with particular insight into patterns observed in systemic connective tissue diseases, the field I am also interested in.

Furthermore, I participated in various internal workshops and seminars focused on severe asthma management, biologic therapies, and the latest clinical guidelines, which helped me integrate evidence-based approaches into daily practice.

### **Research and Data Management**

Reversible airflow obstruction defines asthma, yet a subset of patients develops persistent airflow limitation (PAL), associated with airway remodeling, poor disease control, and overlap with COPD. During the EAACI Clinical Fellowship, I actively collected clinical and functional data as part of a research project aimed at comparing asthma patients with and without PAL. The study included adult patients who had performed pre- and post-bronchodilator spirometry within the previous six months, and they were classified into PAL and non-PAL groups based on post-BD FEV<sub>1</sub>/FVC values. Throughout the fellowship, I gathered demographic, clinical, and spirometric data. The creation of this database formed the basis for an abstract submitted to the EAACI ISAF RHINA conference (November 2025, Porto), with acceptance pending, and preparation of a full-length manuscript is planned.

During the fellowship, I prepared two additional abstracts:

- Effectiveness of Reslizumab in the Management of Severe Eosinophilic Asthma: Experience from a Single Centre

- Early-Onset Eosinophilic Granulomatosis with Polyangiitis (EGPA) in an 18-Year-Old: Successful Treatment with Benralizumab

Both were accepted and presented at the EAACI Allergy School 2025: Biologicals, Type 2 Inflammation and Eosinophil-Associated Diseases (4–6 September 2025, Florence, Italy), further strengthening my interest in severe asthma and the application of biologic therapies. These experiences provided a meaningful conclusion to the fellowship and served as a strong motivation for continued research in this field.

### **Achievements and Skills Acquired**

The main objectives of the fellowship were to enhance clinical expertise in the management of asthma and severe asthma, gain experience in a multidisciplinary approach, and acquire advanced diagnostic and therapeutic protocols. These goals were achieved through direct patient evaluation and follow-up, active participation in treatment planning and case discussions, attendance at seminars and educational sessions, and the collection and analysis of clinical data for research purposes.

As a result of this fellowship, I developed practical skills in managing patients with asthma and severe asthma, improved my understanding of European treatment standards, gained deeper knowledge of biologic therapies and their applications, actively participated in advanced workshops and seminars, established a patient database that served as the basis for an abstract submitted to an international conference, and strengthened my skills in interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork.

### **Language and Integration**

In addition to clinical and research activities, I successfully completed an Italian language course (A1 level), which enabled more effective communication with patients and the clinical team. I plan to continue improving my Italian to facilitate future international collaborations and clinical interactions.

### **Conclusion**

This fellowship was extremely valuable for my professional development. It allowed me to integrate clinical practice with a multidisciplinary approach, gain hands-on experience in advanced functional diagnostics, and enhance my research skills. I am particularly motivated to continue working in the field of biologic therapy for asthma and in providing a personalized approach to patients with severe asthma. I believe that the experiences gained during this fellowship will contribute not only to my professional growth but also to the advancement of clinical practice in Serbia.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Matteo Bonini for accepting me as his fellow and for being an exceptional mentor and host throughout my stay. His dedication, kindness, and willingness to explain even the smallest clinical and research details greatly enriched my learning experience and professional development. I am truly thankful for the opportunity to learn under his guidance and to be part of his team.

I am also very grateful to the entire staff of the Department of Public Health and Infectious Diseases, Policlinico Umberto I, Sapienza University of Rome, for their constant support and collaboration during the fellowship.

Special thanks go to Dr. Martina Moscatelli, whose daily assistance in the clinic was essential in helping me manage complex cases and improve my practical skills in advanced diagnostic procedures.

I would also like to thank my home institution and mentor, Prof. Vesna Tomić-Spirić, for her continuous encouragement and support.

Finally, I am deeply appreciative of the financial support provided by EAACI, which made this fellowship and my professional growth possible.

Milica Terzic

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