Complete urological care at AZ Groeninge, Kortrijk

Belgian Non-Academic Urology Department recertified by EBU

With 1300 beds, AZ Groeninge is the second-largest hospital in Belgium in a single location. This hospital is the result of a merger of all the existing hospitals of the city of Kortrijk in 1998. Kortrijk is situated in the West of Belgium to the French border and to the “linguistic border” between the northern Dutch-speaking part and the southern French-speaking part of the country. The larger city area has an estimated population of 170,000 inhabitants. Kortrijk’s first Onze Lieve Vrouwe Hospital was founded in the 13th century. Today it is a protected patrimony. Today it is part of the protected National Heritage.

In the current AZ Groeninge, 220 medical doctors specialists are active, and over 2,400 people are employed. Every year, 31,269 new admissions are counted, with 286,698 hospitalisation days. On top of that, in 2010 there have been 3,545 one-day clinic admissions, and 39,544 emergency admissions, resulting in 114,544 hospitalisation days. A completely new hospital building is under construction, to be finished in 2016.

Pilsener Residency Training Programme in Urology

The Department of Urology is part of a University Hospital with 1300 beds. It is part of Charles University in Prague, which has one of its Faculties of Medicine in Pilsen. Pilsen (or Plzen in Czech) is located 80km west south from Prague, and has 110,000 inhabitants. The department has 52 adult and 4 paediatric beds, and employs 27 full-time urologists (including 8 residents). It has over 2700 admissions per year, about 200 operations and over 300 ESWLs, and over 33,000 visits in the out-patient department. The department is the only urological department for the Pilsen region’s 570,000 inhabitants. There are treated all urological diseases from circumstances to cystectomies.

The department is specialised in diagnosis and treatment of kidney tumours (210 surgeries for kidney tumours in 2010), surgical treatment of BPH (260 cases per year) and laparoscopy (254 in 2010). The main topics for research are kidney tumours, diagnosis, laparoscopy, histopathology, molecular biology and tumour markers. Here, urology is also taught to students of Faculty of Medicine. The employees speak Czech, English, German and Russian. All subspecialties that cooperate with urology are present in the hospital, including radiology (CT, MRI, PET/CT etc.), pathology (which is also the department’s laboratory), laboratories performing research in tumour markers and so on.

Training in the Czech Republic

The urological training in Pilsen is set out in the table below. This generally applies to the whole of the Czech Republic.

The programme is prepared according to the European Urology Residency Curriculum by the EBU. Every resident has his or her own personal tutor, written educational programme including a plan of rotation on wards and departments, and logbook (all surgeries are recorded). The teaching process is regularly evaluated by the residents and their tutors.

The residents rotate through different subunits of the department, such as wards, operating rooms, ESWL, and the out-patient department. Residents are trained in ultrasonography, prostate biopsies, and urodynamics as well. Following five years of training, residents should be able to perform all common endoscopic procedures (TURB, TURP, ureteroscopy, nephrostomy, and common open procedures (external genitalia, lumbo- and laparotomy with at least deliberation of kidney, open prostatectomy). He or she has to assist all procedures related to laparoscopic operations.

The residents participate in the patient discussions, decision making, and multidisciplinary oncological consultations. Their professional presentations to colleagues residents and staff, have full access to the paper and internet library of the department. They are stimulated to be the author of a poster, an oral presentation or a written article in a peer-reviewed journal.

The final exam is an oral exam taken in front of five examiners (including an EBU-rewarded efforts of the department, and are indeed aware of the continuing search for the best possible quality. This EBU recertification is really worth the efforts to obtain it and should be a stimulus for others to go for it.

EBU Certified Centres