

ESGE–ESGENA Live Demonstration Workshop in Sofia, Bulgaria, 21–22 November 2008

Wendy Waagenes

When I was invited to take part in the ESGE–ESGENA Live Endoscopy Workshop held in Sofia in November, I already had some experience in performing live endoscopy training in my own endoscopic unit, but had never worked at a hospital in a different country before. After a preliminary meeting with the rest of the team at United European Gastroenterology Week (UEGW) in Vienna, I was looking forward to working with Michael Ortmann, Jane Tillett and one of my own colleagues from home, Anne Elsborg. I felt confident that we would be a good team and ready for the challenges the workshop would bring – and this proved to be very much the case.

The workshop was held over 2 days, combining live endoscopy and lectures. It was a joint ESGE–ESGENA event for doctors and nurses, with six doctors travelling to Sofia in addition to our team of four nurses. There were separate lectures for the doctors and nurses, providing an opportunity to focus on the different topics relevant to each profession. The four of us also held a workshop for the local nurses on the third day, after the main event. The workshop, held at the Military Medical Academy (MMA) hospital in Sofia, was worlds away from my everyday life in the endoscopy unit at Bispebjerg Hospital in Copenhagen. We spent a day at the hospital listening to presentations of all the cases and deciding which ones to take. The local unit presented us with 36 cases, and we carried out 30 procedures during the workshop. The procedure rooms we used were the operating rooms for laparoscopic surgery, so the local nurses were also not in their usual workplace. I thought they did an incredible job, considering the conditions. It was new to all of us and we quickly established good teamwork, despite the lack of a common language. Most of the time there was someone around who could translate. The workshop on the Sunday was very well received by the local nurses, and the participants seemed to get a lot out of it. There was an interpreter present, which was a great help for getting questions answered – otherwise a lot can also be taught by doing!

After the experience in Sofia, I have seen my own everyday working life from a different perspective. It is good to go and have a first-hand look at what is happening in other places and reflect on what you take for granted in your own daily work. It was very rewarding to work with the local nurses in Sofia, and they were very appreciative of our efforts.

We also had an opportunity to take part in some Bulgarian folk dancing at a reception on the Friday evening, which was great fun and helped in establishing contacts and friendships.

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**Endoscopy team with European experts at the
ESGE–ESGENA Live Demonstration Workshop 2008
in Sofia**