

ASDS International Preceptorship Program

Turkish Dermatologist Visits New York City for Mohs Surgery Exposure

Leyla Elmas, MD, details her two-week preceptorship experience.



As a final-year resident with a strong passion for advancing my training in the field of dermatologic surgery and cosmetics, I was seeking an inspirational experience in the United States, where I hope to continue my career. In November 2023, I had a great preceptorship experience with John A. Carucci, MD, PhD, at the New York University Langone Dermatologic Surgery & Cosmetics Associates.

Dermatology is a highly regarded and sought-after specialty in my country too; however, only a handful of clinics are equipped with Mohs surgery facilities and have trained staff to perform these procedures. While I was fortunate to receive dermatologic surgery training during residency, this ASDS preceptorship took my experience to a much higher level with more intensive surgery schedules, diverse cases and a well-organized workflow in the clinic.

I selected Dr. Carucci as my preceptor due to his extensive experience in Mohs surgery and remarkable research record in the field. From the very first day, it was evident that I had made the right decision. Despite starting my preceptorship right after the busy days of the ASDS Annual Meeting and still feeling the effects of jet lag, I never once felt tired after experiencing the warmest welcome and witnessing his unbelievable dedication to both the patients and his job. Each day, I participated in several Mohs surgeries, read slides, joined in case discussions, observed defect closures and conducted follow-up visits with patients. During these tasks, Dr. Carucci provided invaluable mentorship, emphasizing the importance of professionalism and a compassionate approach toward the patients. Dr. Carucci was very committed to providing the best experience to his patients, and he was highly sensitive to the effectiveness of anesthesia during

procedures. Dr. Carucci's expertise and knowledge made every case inspiring, and we also had meaningful conversations with patients during the procedures, which added to the exceptional memories.

Dr. Carucci always made me feel like I was an important part of the team and involved me in every stage of patient care, just like the other team members such as his Fellow Priscilla Kojder, MD, staff nurses, histopathology technicians and front desk staff. I admired how he was preparing his Fellow for the future by giving her responsibilities and procedures to manage. After witnessing their work in action, I was even more motivated to pursue a similar pathway in the U.S.

The main difference between my preceptorship and my previous training was that my institution has an on-site pathologist to evaluate slides with the Mohs surgeon, whereas Dr. Carucci was evaluating slides and making decisions on his own, which I found impressive. I also noticed more secondary intention healing for wounds, which had very good results, and that the indications and contraindications of Mohs surgery were quite similar. The closures I saw were unique to each patient depending on the size, location and suitability for the best outcome and survival, which was the most fascinating aspect of my experience.

When Dr. Carucci devoted his time to research studies on Fridays, I had the opportunity to work with Nayoung Lee, MD. Observing her different approaches and treatment strategies was enlightening, as I saw how they could be applied successfully to similar cases. I had the pleasure of discussing slides in the lab with Mary L. Stevenson, MD, who was



also kind enough to give me some excellent recommendations for places to visit during my trip to New York City.

After I finished my two-week preceptorship, I had a couple of days to do be a tourist, as well as the opportunity to shadow Neil Sadick, MD, for a day at his private practice after having met at the ASDS Annual Meeting. I appreciated this additional clinical opportunity, especially in the area of hair transplant which is a common and well-developed procedure in Türkiye.

The privilege of attending a preceptorship in my specialty just after completing residency significantly elevated my level of expertise and competence. The ASDS International Preceptorship Program was an incredible experience that reignited my motivation and realigned my focus on the dermatologic surgery career path that I've always wanted. ASDS has been an irreplaceable bridge that's allowed me to develop excellent professional connections and friends. Through this experience, I gained invaluable knowledge and developed crucial skills that I know will serve me well as I continue to grow in my career. I am grateful for the support and guidance provided particularly by ASDS and Dr. Carucci, and all the colleagues I was able to meet; I look forward to staying connected with this inspiring community for years to come. ●