

Interviews

What have been the most valuable experiences to you during the study-visit in Italy?

Ahmet Varoglu: *The most valuable experiences during study-visit in Italy were the hospital visits, as I had the chance to see the differences between my country.*

Emine Çolak: *The most valuable experiences were the on-site visits to see implementation.*

What are the lessons learned that you found useful for the activities in your country?

Emine Çolak: *Lessons learned: the importance and potential of volunteer know how/activism. Also, that even in a very bad situation to start with, such as our health system, commitment and systematic efforts can in time change the outlook and the impact. The importance of stressing that quality and equal opportunity in health care is not something to hope for in the system. It is a RIGHT and must be seen as such both by the patient and the provider/government.*

Based on the meeting with the Italian Thalassemia Association, do you think that Italian thalassaemic patients experience the same needs and difficulties of the Turkish-Cypriot ones? What are the main similarities and differences?

Ahmet Varoglu: *No. Italian Thalassaemic patients are luckier as they receive better treatments and facilities. Treatments and social and psychological effects of Thalassaemia are similar, but there are big differences in blood supply for patients, as we are having big problems of finding enough blood for treatment.*

After returning from the study-visit in Italy, how do you plan to work to strengthen the capacity advocate for and protect patients' rights in the Turkish Cypriot community? Please, do indicate at least a concrete activity you would like to accomplish.

Ahmet Varoglu: *I will try to monitor the patients' problems and demands more closely and inform the management and ministry of health more. As member of a patients' rights association, I will use the press and act to publicize the problems. I will also inform the public about the patients' rights.*

Emine Çolak: *I intend to work with the UPRA to develop the system of application for complaints - also to ensure follow up of unresolved matters with legal action. In the common law system, precedent is vital and they need to be more and more. Medical health providers need to fear the consequences of doing a bad job - at the moment this is not the case. Connected with this, there is the necessity to spread the need for insurance against medical negligence so that a patient can be fully protected for damages suffered.*



This project is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Universal Patient Rights Association and the Active Citizenship Network.