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Selected as a Rome Foundation Visiting Scholar, I had the privilege to visit Dr Drossman in his clinic at DrossmanCare. Furthermore, I was given the opportunity to spend some time at the University of North Carolina, Centre for Functional Gastrointestinal and Motility Disorders, where I met Dr Whitehead and Dr Palsson and engage in discussions on my research as part of the Rome Foundation Mentorship Program.

During my surgical practice I have developed special interest for managing patients with functional bowel disorders. These patients, often misdiagnosed and misunderstood, represent a significant challenge in the medical practice. The aim of my trip to Chapel Hill, North Carolina was to observe communication and management skills in this particular field of medicine that is situated at crossroads between multiple disciplines: gastroenterology, psychiatry, psychology and neurophysiology. It takes significant experience to master these disciplines enabling one to put them in the service of patients suffering of functional gastrointestinal disorders. Dr Drossman is probably the best teacher to get such training from.

He is author of extensive number of papers on different aspects of functional GI disorders, a world renowned expert in this field, a pioneer whose work has brought understanding, guidance and many helpful toolkits in the hands of clinicians all over the world. This knowledge has been summarised in the exceptional collection of the ROME book set, recently launching its fourth edition.

Apart of his exceptional speciality skills, Dr Drossman is one of those few titans of the medical profession, whose whole personality and actions are emanating respect for self, for profession and most of all dedicated to the patient. He was trained in the Golden Age of medicine when much less technology and pharmaceutical advances were available, instead much more humanism and dedication to the patient were the tools of the healing professional.

My visit happened to be literally stormy, as Hurricane Florence was on its way to North Carolina and some of my travel companions on the airplane were wearing red crosses with "disaster zone volunteer" inscriptions, still Dr Drossman did his outmost best to help me make the most of my visit and accommodate despite of the impending natural disaster.

I was given much pre-visit study material that we have talked over during our meeting and I have seen its application in practice during patient visits. Dr Drossman has exceptional skills in creating educational videos about one of the corner-stones in the management of patients: communication skills. I was given access to these videos and have seen what a huge difference it can make in history taking and patient disclosure.

During my visit, I also had the chance to visit Dr Palsson and Dr Whitehead at the University of North Carolina, Centre for Functional Gastrointestinal and Motility Disorders and we have put in perspective a fruitful collaboration.

It is an honour to consider Dr Drossman my mentor in the field of Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders and I am very much looking forward to further collaboration and my next visit to Chapel Hill.