

Treatment of esophageal cancer has significantly changed over the last 10 years thanks to the improved knowledge about the disease but also the development of less invasive technologies. As an esophageal surgeon that has dedicated several years studying esophageal physiology, pathology and surgical techniques, I felt as if I was missing a very important treatment modality that can be offered today to patients with esophageal diseases: advanced endoscopic treatment. With the support of Women in Thoracic Surgery and the Carolyn E. Reed Traveling Fellowship I had the opportunity to spend time at the Oregon Clinic in Portland, Oregon with Drs. Lee Swanstrom and Steve DeMeester. Dr. Swanstrom is a pioneer in advanced endoscopic treatment for benign and malignant esophageal diseases and Dr. DeMeester is one of the first thoracic surgeons applying endoscopic treatment for Barrett's esophagus, esophageal cancer and esophageal achalasia. Spending time with these two incredible mentors was very important in my career not only to learn a new technique and how to apply it to patients' care but also to better understand the disease, the evolution of treatment and their perspective about the future possibilities. I also enjoyed learning how they run their practice and the efficiency that comes from many years of experience. After I returned home I was able to start my own advanced endoscopic practice and I have already completed several endoscopic mucosal resections. I am planning to return to Portland at the end of April to dedicate time specifically learning peroral endoscopic myotomy. This technique is very important not only to treat patients with esophageal achalasia but also to learn the skills necessary to advance from basic ablation and endoscopic mucosal resection to more sophisticated techniques, like endoscopic submucosal resection and endoscopic resection of submucosal tumors. I feel very fortunate to have established such a supportive relationship with my mentors, as I know I can reach out to them at any time for advice or just to share ideas. I never personally met Dr. Carolyn Reed but her dedication and passion for mentoring younger surgeons remain alive in this Traveling Grant and will inspire future generations of women surgeons. I want to thank WTS and TSFRE for the opportunity of being part of this legacy.