

*Dr. Zoly, a Malagasy specialist and researcher working in cooperation with the BNITM and the University Hospital of Mahajanga (Madagascar), is currently in Cologne (Germany) for an advanced training course in colposcopy in order to improve her knowledge to support innovative solutions to female genital schistosomiasis, a neglected tropical disease endemic in Madagascar. She shares with us her story and ambitions.*

Picture (1): Dr. Zoly performing training in the operating theatre (OT).

Pictures (2): Dr. Zoly performing colposcopy.

**Hello Dr. Zoly, how are you? Can you introduce yourself and your current project?**

Hello, I am Dr. Zoly RAKOTOMALALA, Gynaecologist practicing at the University Hospital PZAGA Androva Mahajanga, Madagascar. Currently, through the BNITM and EDUMAD that offered me a scholarship, I am spending a month of internship at the Hospital St Elisabeth Köln-Hohenlinden, in Cologne, Germany.

As for the current project, since 2021, we have been carrying out a mass screening of female genital schistosomiasis which is very endemic and responsible for many complications in our country, especially in the north-western regions. This project takes place in three peripheral Basic Health Centres in the Boeny Region.

**Very interesting! What are the goals of your training in Cologne?**

In fact, this training will allow me to improve my skills mainly in reading colposcopy images in order to be able to advance our research projects but also to refer to the patient management system in "developed" countries like Germany.

**Okay, so you are working in research projects as well as in the clinic. What are the goals here?**

As a gynaecologist, working at a University Hospital, I have three main duties: care, education, and research.

Firstly, regarding care, this mass screening in peripheral centres favours health care services close to the population in remote areas which are more exposed to Schistosome infestation.

Secondly, during the project, the midwives concerned receive training on the pathology itself but also on colposcopy examination and image interpretation.

And thirdly, this will allow us to author articles and present oral communications to share our experience with others.

**You are discovering the German health care system after having worked in France and Madagascar. What are the differences?**

The health care system in Germany and France only differs in a few details (rate of screening for pre-cancerous cervical lesions, type of Pap smear performed).

However, compared to developed countries, the health system in our country is marked by some fundamental points to mention: the geographical and financial difficulties to access care, the insufficiency of material, financial and human resources within the health Centres, as well as the beliefs and customs of the population preventing them from accepting care.

**What do you wish for the health system in Madagascar?**



In Madagascar, it is important to prioritize public health: to set up a health recovery system and ensure the availability of transport, equipment, and personnel from the most remote health centres to the reference hospitals.

**What are the challenges for access to health and education for all in your opinion?**

Geographical isolation is one of the main causes of difficulty in accessing health centres and education. It takes hours and days of walking, dugout canoeing and road trips for some places to find a health centre.

**What has been your journey? What advice do you give to young Malagasy and German doctors to succeed at the beginning of their career?**

In short, I got my baccalaureate C in 2003 and then I followed my medical course at the Faculty of Medicine of Antananarivo from 2003 to 2010 to become a Doctor of Medicine.

After passing the Internship Examination, I chose the discipline of Obstetrics and Gynaecology from 2010 to 2015 by spending 2 years of study in Amiens France (November 2011 to October 2013). In 2015, I obtained the Diploma of Study and Specialized Training in Obstetrics Gynaecology

In 2016, I was selected for the Clinical competition and had spent, once again, a year of study in Amiens (in November 2019 to October 2020).

Currently, I am working as a clinical specialist in the University Hospital Androva Majunga and lecturer, teacher researcher in the Faculty of Medicine of Mahajanga

For young doctors who have just finished or who are still in the process of studying, medicine is an eternal study. Never be satisfied with what you know, or what you think you know. Seek to go further. Put it to use. Update your knowledge. Travel the world to share your experiences but also receive those of other countries. All countries need brave and motivated doctors like you.

**What questions are you still missing? Do you have anything to add?**

Finally, I would like to thank BNITM, Edumad and especially the research group of Dr. Daniela Fusco who offered me this valuable opportunity. I wish the success and the perpetuation of our common projects. Furthermore, I would like to thank Professor Hampl and her team at the St. Elisabeth Hospital, Köln Hohenlinden. Thank you very much for your warm welcome and for the knowledge sharing you gave me during my stay.

