

Research Exchange Report – Siena, Italy

During my four-week research stay in Siena, I had the opportunity to work at the Azienda Ospedaliero-Universitaria Senese and to experience daily life in one of Italy's most beautiful historic cities. I stayed near the old city walls, close to the historic centre, which made it easy to explore Siena's rich culture and traditions.

At the hospital, I joined the neurology team and attended outpatient consultations, which provided valuable insight into their diagnostic approach for patients across the Alzheimer's disease continuum. Together with my Italian colleagues, I contributed to building a shared research database by selecting patients and collecting relevant clinical information from medical records. We also exchanged ideas and shared perspectives on clinical practice and ongoing research in Alzheimer's disease, which was an enriching experience for both sides. This collaborative effort forms the basis for future joint publications, on which I will contribute as both shared and first author.

My visit coincided with the Palio di Siena, the city's centuries-old horse race that takes place on the Piazza del Campo — the central square of Siena. Ten horses, each representing a contrada (one of the city's seventeen historic districts), compete in an intense and colourful event that unites the whole community. I was lucky to witness one of the races and the surrounding festivities — a unique blend of history, tradition, and passion. Outside of work, I loved discovering the local cuisine, especially the fresh pasta dishes and daily gelato, which quickly became part of my routine.

Overall, this exchange offered a meaningful combination of scientific learning and cultural immersion. It strengthened international collaboration, broadened my understanding of clinical research in Alzheimer's disease, and provided many inspiring experiences — both inside and outside the hospital.