

One week visit to Bionorica, Innsbruck, Austria

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As part of the planned activities included in the Tobeatpain consortium, I undertook a one-week visit to Bionorica, Innsbruck. Bionorica is a company based on the medicinal properties of herbal compounds.

In Bionorica, they have mastered the analysis of compounds present in herbal extracts, but also in other animal and human tissues, through the mass spectrometry technique. Through this technique, with the supervision and incredible help from Katharina Strommer, one of the main experts in it, we analyzed the lipid compounds present in different human samples.

The samples, including serum, cerebrospinal fluid, skin and nerve, were collected in the University Hospital of Würzburg, Germany, from patients with polyneuropathies and from healthy and disease controls. The patients were further divided according to their levels of pain. The main goal of our project was to find differences in lipid compounds involved in pro-inflammatory pathways between patients with painful and painless polyneuropathies. Increased levels of these compounds would indicate an involvement of inflammation in the development of pain.

Due to COVID19 restrictions and the complexity of the technique, this secondment initially planned for 3 months was reduced to a 1 week visit, in which the laboratory work was performed, while the analysis of the data was carried out online from Würzburg, Germany.

Currently the analysis is ongoing and we would like to repeat the experiments to get conclusive results. Therefore the remaining time of my secondment is planned to be carried out at the end of 2021.

The experience and the city are fascinating and I am very excited to come back to continue this project, as soon as the COVID pandemic allows it.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Grant Agreement No 764860