

The Meniscus Travelling Fellowship 2025 – European Chapter

January 12–26, 2025

****Participating Fellows:****

- Dr. Akira Tsujii (Japan, the University of Osaka)
- Dr. Kyu Sung Chung (Korea, Asan Medical Center)
- Dr. Jérôme Valcarenghi (Belgium, CHU Helora Site Kennedy – Mons)
- Dr. Nicola Pizza (Spain, Institut Catalá de Traumatologia i Medicina de l'Esport)

****Organized by:**** The Meniscus Group under ESSKA, with support from the Japanese Knee Society (JKS) and the Korean Arthroscopy Society (KAS)

1. Introduction

The Meniscus Travelling Fellowship 2025 (European Chapter) was established by The Meniscus Group under ESSKA, in collaboration with the Japanese Knee Society (JKS) and the Korean Arthroscopy Society (KAS). This newly established program was designed to foster global collaboration, exchange advanced knowledge in meniscal science, and strengthen academic and cultural ties between Europe and Asia.



The two-week fellowship (January 12–26, 2025) brought together four early-career orthopaedic surgeons specializing in knee surgery and sports medicine. The itinerary included leading medical institutions in France (Versailles), Belgium (Antwerp and Brussels), Luxembourg, and Germany (Berlin), concluding with participation in the 6th Meniscus Congress. The experience integrated clinical observation, academic dialogue, hands-on surgical training, and cross-cultural engagement.

2. Program Overview

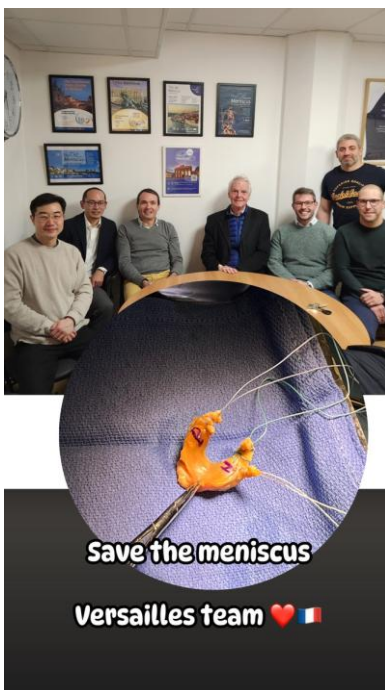
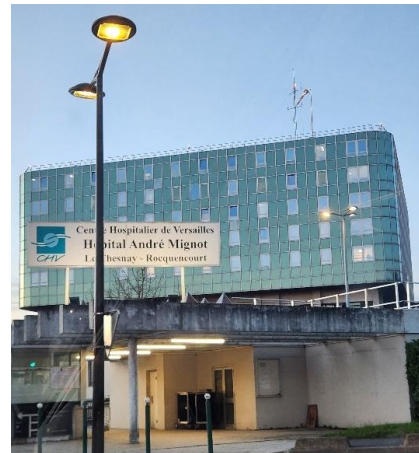
The fellowship offered an intensive exploration of contemporary approaches to meniscus preservation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation, emphasizing the philosophy of “Save the Meniscus.”

At each destination, the fellows engaged with internationally renowned surgeons and researchers, observed cutting-edge techniques, and discussed emerging concepts in biomechanics, graft design, and regenerative therapies. The journey also provided invaluable opportunities for personal connection and intercultural understanding among fellows and hosts alike.

3. Site Visits and Academic Activities

➤ Versailles, France (January 13–14)

The European fellowship began in Versailles at the Centre Hospitalier de Versailles under Professors Nicolas Pujol and Philippe Beaufile. The program introduced fellows to advanced knee procedures including meniscal allograft transplantation (LMAT), ACL reconstruction using bone–patellar tendon–bone (BTB) grafts, and robotic total knee arthroplasty (TKA) performed with ROSA system.

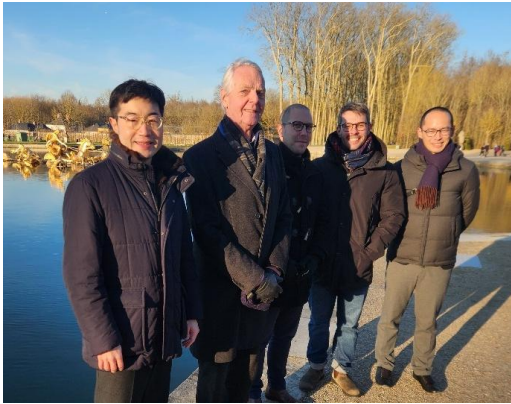


Prof. Pujol emphasized the technique of preserving the intermeniscal ligament during LMAT to reduce graft extrusion, a refined method that underscored his dedication to biomechanical precision. His explanations on graft centralization strategies and outcome optimization encouraged the fellows to reexamine their own surgical approaches.

Prof. Philippe Beaufile, mentor to Prof. Pujol and a key figure in European knee surgery, personally guided the group through the Palace of Versailles. His generous mentorship, historical insight, and enthusiasm reflected a holistic approach to orthopaedic education — balancing

academic rigor with cultural and humanistic values. The visit concluded with a formal dinner in Versailles, celebrating the fellowship's beginning and the bonds formed among hosts and fellows.





➤ Antwerp & Brussels, Belgium (January 15–18)

The fellowship continued in Antwerp at AZ Monica Hospital, hosted by Professor Peter Verdonk, a global authority on meniscal transplantation and biologic repair. The fellows observed a diverse range of surgeries: ACL reconstruction using hamstring tendon grafts, lateral extra-articular tenodesis (LET), high tibial osteotomy (HTO) employing 3D-printed allograft bone wedges, and total as well as unicompartmental knee arthroplasties. Prof. Verdonk's efficiency and precision were remarkable — performing over a dozen surgeries in a single day with consistent excellence.



His leadership style encouraged dialogue and active participation, creating an atmosphere of mutual learning. Outside the operating theatre, Prof. Verdonk shared his clinical philosophies and his father's legacy in meniscal transplantation. The fellows experienced the familial culture of Belgian orthopaedics — collegial, innovative, and deeply respectful of its heritage.

The academic highlight was the Brussels symposium organized by Professor René Verdonk, where discussions focused on biomechanics, biologic scaffolds, and regenerative strategies

in meniscus restoration. Prof. Verdonk's hospitality — personally chauffeuring the fellows between Antwerp and Brussels — and the evening dinner he hosted exemplified mentorship through generosity and genuine human connection. Cultural exploration of Brussels, including historic landmarks and Belgian cuisine, completed an unforgettable stay.



➤ Luxembourg (January 19)

The fellowship then moved to Luxembourg, hosted by Professors Romain Seil and Caroline Mouton at the Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg. This visit focused on sports traumatology, with emphasis on ACL reconstruction using quadriceps tendon–bone grafts, meniscal root repair, and osteotomy planning. Prof. Seil demonstrated the advantages of the quadriceps graft technique, harvested with the 'QuadPro' device — a minimally invasive tool offering strong biomechanical



properties and reduced donor-site morbidity.

He also presented Luxembourg's integrated model of orthopaedic care, which combines government-supported rehabilitation centers and biomechanics laboratories. The fellows were particularly impressed by the national commitment to sports medicine, where patients receive comprehensive post-operative rehabilitation free of charge. A visit to the biomechanics lab revealed advanced facilities dedicated to ACL and meniscus research, symbolizing the synergy between clinical practice and science.



The day concluded with a tour of Luxembourg's old town and a traditional dinner with Prof. Seil and Dr. Mouton, reinforcing the warmth and camaraderie that defined this stage of the journey.

➤ Berlin, Germany (January 20–26)

The final destination was Berlin, where the fellows joined the ESSKA-sponsored 'All About Meniscus' course at Charité University Hospital (January 21–22), hosted by Professor Sebastian Kopf and an esteemed faculty including Professors René Verdonk, Nicolas Pujol, Alberto Grassi, Adil Ajuied,



and Tobias Jung. The

course integrated theoretical sessions on anatomy and biomechanics with cadaveric workshops focusing on complex meniscal repair techniques — inside-out, outside-in, and all-inside suturing; ramp and root repair;

centralization; and meniscal allograft transplantation.



This hands-on training allowed fellows to practice advanced reconstructions under direct expert supervision, significantly enhancing their technical skills and understanding of procedural nuances.

From January 23 to 25, the fellows participated in the 6th Meniscus Congress, the only international conference devoted exclusively to meniscus science. Sessions addressed meniscal extrusion dynamics, biologic repair methods, and ESSKA consensus updates on degenerative and traumatic tears. Asian and European perspectives converged through presentations and debates, reflecting the global reach of the 'Save the Meniscus' movement.



The congress concluded with a formal banquet at the German Parliament building, where founders Professors Beaufils and Verdonk reflected on the congress's evolution. The Berlin chapter epitomized the synthesis of academic rigor, international collaboration, and shared friendship that defined the fellowship.



4. Key Insights and Reflections

The fellowship illuminated key themes:

- Meniscal preservation philosophy: a shared global shift toward biological repair and transplantation rather than excision.
- Diversity of graft and fixation strategies: from BTB grafts in France to quadriceps tendon techniques in Luxembourg.
- Intergenerational mentorship: the transmission of values and expertise across generations.
- Integration of science and humanity: blending technical mastery with humility and warmth.
- Foundation for global collaboration: establishing enduring academic and personal bonds.

5. Conclusion

The Meniscus Travelling Fellowship 2025 (European Stage) was far more than an academic journey—it was a transformative experience uniting surgeons from Asia and Europe under a shared vision of advancing meniscus science.

Through intensive surgical training, scholarly dialogue, and personal connection, the fellows deepened their understanding of both the art and science of meniscal preservation. The program strengthened the bridge between continents and generations, setting the stage for the Asian Chapter in Himeji, Japan (December 2025).

With sincere gratitude to all hosts and organizers—particularly Profs. Pujol, Beaufils, Verdonk, Seil, Mouton, and Kopf—the fellows reaffirm their commitment to collaboration, excellence, and mentorship.

