



ENTOG EXCHANGE REPORT

WROCLAW + WARSAW

3rd June 2019 – 8th June 2019

A SELECTION OF OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS OF
DR MEI YEE NG
Registrar in Obstetrics & Gynaecology

DISCLAIMER

The words expressed in this report are personal, and the views of JOGS and all other organizations I am related to, are not implied in anything written by the writer.

Any comments exchanged in conversation with other exchange delegates are reported as is and may not have all been fact-checked – therefore JOGS and the writer cannot be held liable for anything inaccurate, insensitive, racist, defaming, or profane.

Introductions

Hello! My name is **Mei-Yee**.

I am the ENTOG Representative to JOGS since September 2018. I completed my BST in O&G in July 2016 and now holds the Registrar Lecturer post with Trinity College Dublin while pursuing my MD.

I am joined in my ENTOG Exchange to Wrocław by

1. Minttu from Kuopio, Finland – Final year trainee
2. Hazal from Turkey – Final year trainee

We each have a trainee from Wrocław to host our stay and guide us in their hospital

1. Aleksandra 'Ola' – 3rd Year trainee
2. Karolina – 3rd Year trainee
3. Agata – Final Year trainee



(L to R): Ola, Hazal, Mei Yee and Minntu





A bumpy beginning to the exchange...

Sunday 2nd June 2019 – An unexpected start to the day

"Hold on a minute...why is there so much sunlight?!"

That was my first thought as I reached out for my phone and realised it is now 7am! My flight was scheduled to depart at 6.30am and my alarm was set for 3am...which should have left me plenty of time to catch the Aircoach bus to the airport, get a McDonalds breakfast and do some gift shopping for my Polish host.

Of all the times RyanAir have delayed flights, alas, it was not today! A frantic check on Skyscanner yielded success; a ticket was available to get to Wrocław on the same day at 3.30pm! Hurrah...I was back in the game though with a much lighter pocket...!

We had set up a WhatsApp group in the lead up to the exchange. From our exchange on ETA, I knew I was supposed to be the first to arrive in Wrocław. Ironically, now I am the last to arrive to the party at midnight after a thankfully uneventful short transit in Munich.

My host (and soon-to-be friend) Ola was post-call. I was glad my delay had given her some time to rest before she picked me up at the airport. Her fresh-faced, enthusiastic and warm hospitality soon made me forget all about my mishaps to get to this city for my exchange! *It might also have something to do with the fact that she got me some yummy **pierogi** – Polish dumplings; to snack on as soon as we arrive in her beautiful apartment; and told me that as she was on-call on Saturday, she gets Monday off and we get to start fresh at work on Tuesday!*



pierogi

A quick glance on Wikipedia tells me that Wrocław is a city in Western Poland and is the largest city in the historical region of Silesia. There are 3 units providing O&G care to the Vratislavian population of 640, 648 (2018 statistics – 4th largest city in Poland) and its wider region.





Tuesday 4th June 2019

Housed in a beautiful old refurbished red-bricked building, I was in awe of the department façade as Ola **easily parked** her car at the back of the department building. We made our way to the staff locker room located in the dark basement to change into work clothes – scrub uniforms that I did not realise I needed. Thankfully Ola had some extras which I could just about literally squeeze into. Later that day, I met a medical colleague of Ola dressed in a scrub dress – I was envious; it looked very comfortable (and rather chic) in this sweltering summer made worse by the lack of fans or air conditioner. I was curious by the myriad of uniform style and colours – turned out that it is the **norm to buy and launder your own scrub uniforms**. Theatre scrubs on the other hand is provided by the hospital in the form of a **disposable** non-woven linen scrub top and trousers that was rather perfect for the warm temperature. I like it so much I had considered asking for a pair as souvenir!

We began our day with everyone meeting in the board room. It's certainly a nice ritual as you get to see colleagues and exchange some banter before the senior figures roll in at the dot of 8am. With my rusty Czech language knowledge (which share linguistic similarities to Polish), I could more or less retain my interest in the reporting; at least enough to appreciate that the secretary was not pleased with her medical colleagues about some filing and organisation !. *Some things are not so different no matter where you are... ☺*



The Department

What's better than
a scrub pyjamas?
A scrub nightdress!
☺





(L to R): Landing/ surgical scrub area between labour ward theatre and the labour ward, entrance to the labour ward, labour ward with 4 bays side-by-side, labour ward theatre

Tuesday 4th June 2019

After the meeting, the Professor did a ward round with the history read aloud and examination performed in presence to a large group of medical students, trainees and other patients. It seems I wasn't the only person surprised by how comfortable the patients were with this process. Minttu especially found it shocking and shared that in Finland, **headphones** were given to a patient who shares your room while the medical team is reviewing the patient to **protect confidentiality**.



As Ola was interested in discussing the labour ward practices with me (as only Kiwi is used here) , she asked to be rostered there. Rostering is done day-to-day by the Chief (a Consultant); so that was not an issue for her to swap. I was very lucky to have her explained the reason for the **largest curette I have ever seen**; it was used routinely after every vaginal deliveries as **prevention of retained products**. She explained that using a larger curette would avoid rupturing the soft postpartum uterus – it seems they never had an issue with it before.

I could appreciate how appreciative they must be to have an OT so close to the LW (right next door) seeing as the CS rate is ~80% in this hospital with an annual delivery rate around 3000 babies. However, unlike Minttu, I was very lucky to have witnessed not just 1 but 2 vaginal deliveries in my first day! And nowhere did I see elective episiotomy being done. **Epidural anaesthetic is also a luxury** in this hospital as it is not always available to women.

(L to R): Day surgical theatre, Large surgical theatre, Setup of an antenatal clinic, 2 bedded ward (not every ward has a curtain to separate the beds)



Hospital and its surroundings

Wednesday 5th June 2019

I had more chance to explore the beautiful building and hospital grounds. There were **plenty of green areas** for staff to enjoy their break and have their lunch.

There was however a rather gruesome story behind the beauty - Ola told me the building with the tall chimney was once used as a **gas chamber** during the Nazi regime. I wasn't really sure if she was actually serious about it. But I suppose I shouldn't really be surprised given Poland's dark history. If that was true, it has now repurposed to redeem its dark past into a **modern education centre** for the medical students of Wrocław Medical University



UNIWERSYTECKI
SZPITAL KLINICZNY
im. Jana Mikulicza-Radeckiego
WE WROCŁAWIU



Working Days in Wrocław

Wednesday 5th June 2019 – Joining Ola for her on-call

Garbed in my favourite bright purple disposable scrubs, I happily follow Ola around as she shows more of the facilities including the Doctor's Res which also **doubled as the on-call room**! I am not sure how I feel about this..

Lunch was a sumptuous delight of culinary choices in the modern UMW education centre. The canteen was open for all and have a long opening hours i.e. you are not restricted to following certain unforgiving lunch schedules.

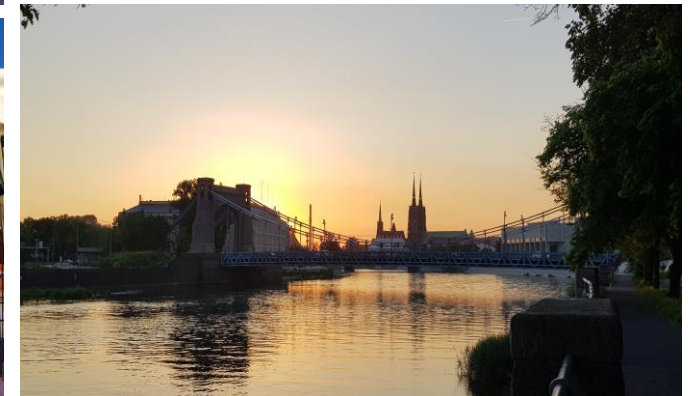
I decided to follow Ola on her night shift. They still have some 24 hours call here albeit the day time finishing time is around 3pm. I assisted her in section once again, this time for a single deceleration on a short CTG for a multiparous woman who was unbooked in pregnancy – which is not unusual here it seems. She was postdates and had meconium on SR0M. We followed on with a visit to the Maternity ED where we saw a few patients. The room appeared a bit dated here but there was no doubt they received excellent care as the low number of patients meant that there was **no pressure to hurry through the patients**.

Alas – I was tempted away by Minttu and Hazel from following through the on-call as I needed to go for some **emergency shopping** for clothes befitting the 32°C weather – pity I can't just wear scrubs all the time!



The City of Wroclaw

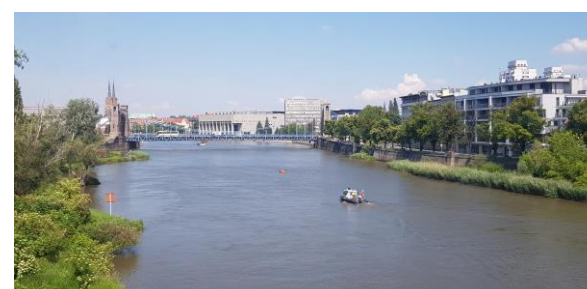
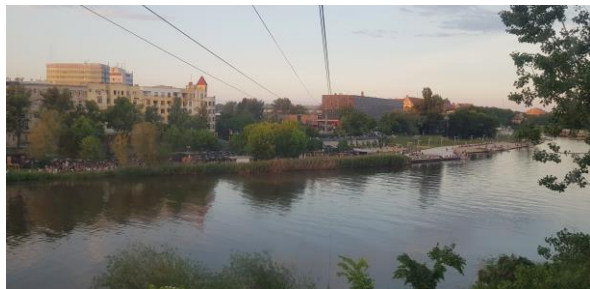
Though it is a big enough city, it has plenty of trees for shade which makes it bearable to walk everywhere though it does have good transport links around the city



Commuting to work

Thursday 6th June 2019

As I have to make my way to the hospital today (a 25 mins walk), I took the opportunity to try out what is to become my **favourite commute to work** – a short cable car ride across the river with beautiful views. This 'Polinka' cable car was a project to connect the 2 campus of the Wrocław Polytechnic School. Lucky for me – it is open for public use for a small fee. Students of that school rides free and have priority 😊



Notes on work-life balance in Wrocław



Wrocław is nowhere near the sea. But that does not stop the people here from creating the feeling that they are near a beach.

Maybe it's because it's summer, maybe it's because of us or maybe my Polish colleagues really do have a **great work-life balance**. With a finish at 3pm unless you are on-call; it was refreshing to partake in enjoyment of the many quaint beach bars around the river. I learnt that the fact that Polish trainees **stay put in a single city** (but may commute to a different hospital) is an important factor for their opportunity to invest in their property, have a pet, increase their income by doing locum shifts, sustain a daring hobby or simply chill with friends after work. I learnt from Hazal and Minttu that the situation is pretty similar in Turkey and Finland. **Envious**



Leaving Beautiful Wroclaw...



Thursday 6th June 2019

It was a short day as we bid goodbye and thanked the departmental staff for their hospitality and the experience. We waited for Ola to recover from her on-call (though the Superwoman that she is seems more energetic than us!) before we make our way to the train station to board a nearly **4 hours** train to Warsaw. We were met with Nora from Denmark and Ana from Portugal with their host; Beata on the same train – plenty of laughter ensues in the comfortable ride. 😊



Welcome Party on a riverboat

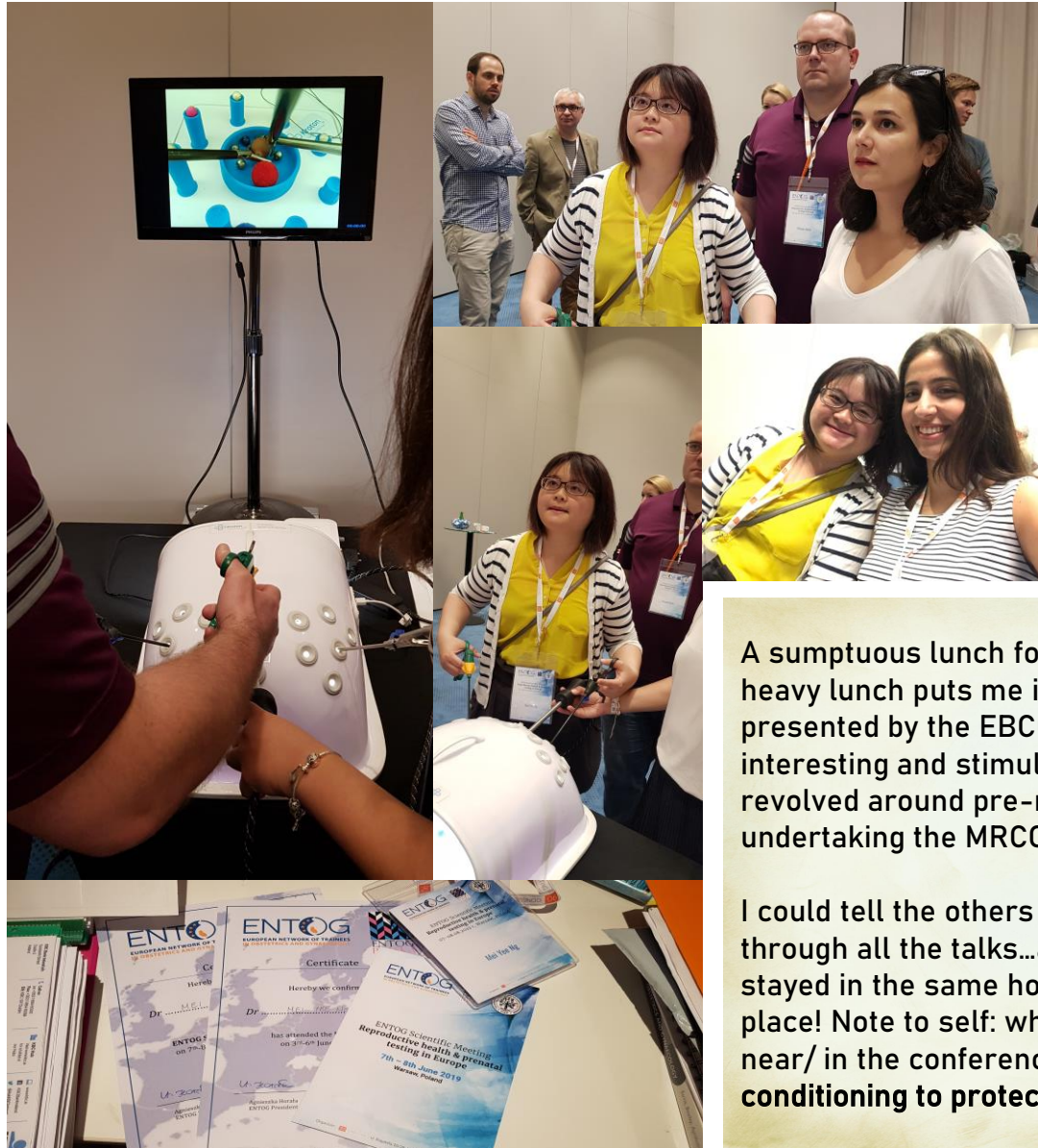


Thursday 6th June 2019 – Evening

After checking in, we immediately have to get ready for it is time to meet the other exchange trainees and their host at the welcome party. The venue was an interesting one aboard an **anchored boat on the Vistula River**. I quickly realised there was no reason to feel nervous at all meeting more people for everyone were friendly and chilled. So much so, that when the party ended here, we continued partying at a Cuban club not so far from the boat – it was refreshing to experience a club without the stink of cigarette smoke (Poland banned indoor smoking in 2010)



ENTOG Scientific Meeting



Friday 7th June 2019

An early morning....bleargh. The last thing I needed after a late night of socialising with my fellow trainees. Thank the stars I have no excuse as I am staying in the same hotel as the meeting is held! And I was really glad not to miss it as the morning sessions were really hands-on activities with laparoscopy simulators, ultrasound scanning with patient volunteers and a crash course in communication.

As I was fairly out of touch with laparoscopy, it was very amusing to try **threading a bead** and being cheeky in achieving the challenges. The sessions were facilitated by our EBCOG counterparts; which gives a warm fuzzy feeling of **proper mentorship** and reminded me that this is how I want to be when I progressed in my career.

A sumptuous lunch followed by an afternoon of talks. Usually a heavy lunch puts me into a really sleepy mode. However, the talks presented by the EBCOG fellowship were well coordinated, interesting and stimulating. The theme of the scientific meeting revolved around pre-natal testing. It certainly helped that I will be undertaking the MRCOG soon...

I could tell the others had thought the same as we all stayed through all the talks...again I suppose it helped that most of us stayed in the same hotel and the dinner was being held in the same place! Note to self: when attending a conference, always best to stay near/ in the conference venue especially when it has **strong air conditioning** to protect one from the melting heat!



Spot the shorts – survival trumps formality! ☺

ENTOG Scientific Meeting Dinner



Friday 7th June 2019

Unlike the meeting of the previous night, this dinner was held in the hotel and members of the EBCOG faculty were invited as well. Undoubtedly, a dinner like this proved to be a wonderful opportunity for us to meet other trainees in a social setting. I happened to reconnect with 2 colleagues from Czech Republic; a husband and wife pair (Roman and Vierka) who happened to be working at the unit in Hradec Kralove; my alma mater and where my passion for obstetrics was ignited!

As dinner ends, the dancing began and more fun follows – be it dancing, observing or simply more chatting 😊



ENTOG Council Meeting

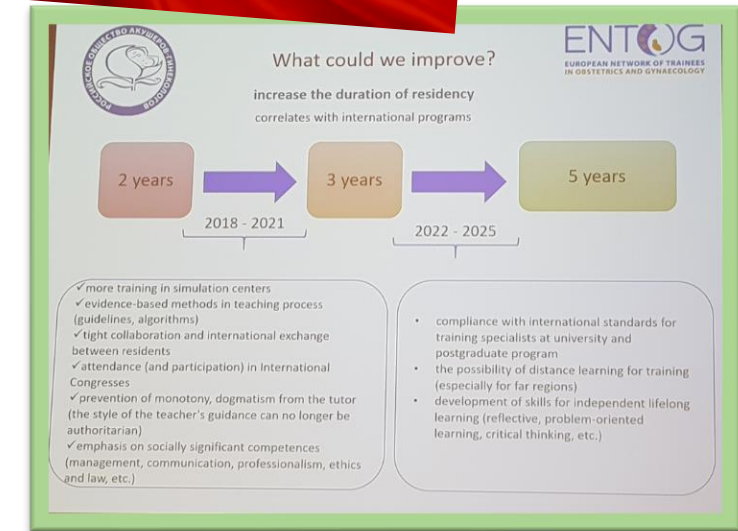
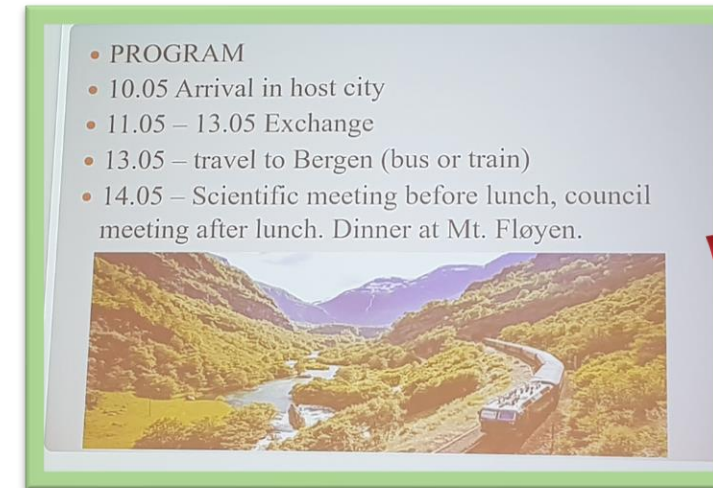
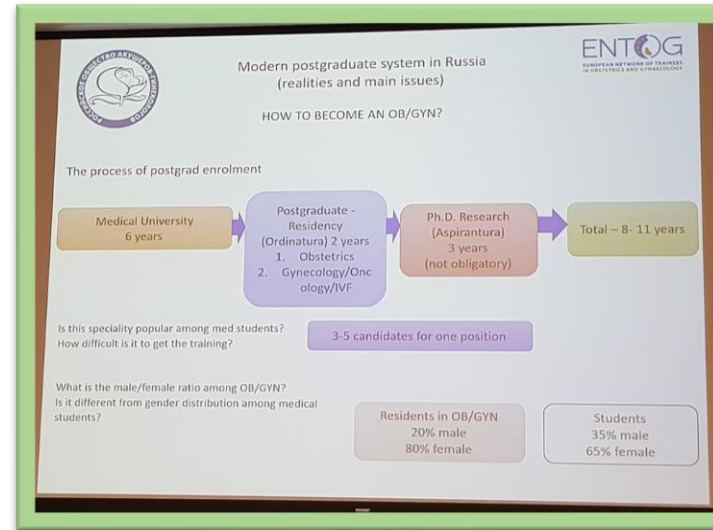
Saturday 8th June 2019 – The last day of the exchange

It was also one of the most important days – we are about to vote if Russia can join ENTOG. The duo gave a passionate pitch and moved the audience enough to their cause that being part of the ENTOG fellowship will help achieve their vision to improve training in Russia.

It continued with Greece winning against Lithuania to be the host for ENTOG exchange in 2021!

Next up, Norway tells us of their exciting plans for the exchange in 2020 which will be held in conjunction with the EBCOG Congress – it looks to be an intriguing one as the theme of their Scientific Meeting is on **Vaginal Breech Delivery**; something trainees in Norway is proficient in. and most others are not.

As the ENTOG executive committee introduce us to the ENTOG activities, it dawned on me what this ENTOG exchange means to me – friendship and fellowship. Something Prof. Jacky Nizard (ENTOG President) said earlier also strike a chord in me – **these are the people I could be working in the future**. As I look at Ola, Hazal and Minttu, I realised these short but meaningful days of hanging out with them really **foster that connection** as we have now shared a unique experience. It was with this feeling that I volunteered to be part of the inaugural **One2One exchange working group!** 😊



Future ENTOG Exchanges



Norway 2020



Greece 2021

Comparisons between training

2 trainees were selected to give a presentation on the training and medical care in their country.
Nina from Finland did not need to try hard to make Finland healthcare system and medical training sounds like a dream especially when compared to the Croatian's; represented by Marijo.

Having spent the last couple of days of the exchange experiencing and discussing the differences, I learnt that we all have **something to learn from each other** no matter if the country is a higher, middle or low-income country.

Training system in Finland

- Selection to the training program
 - 2019 new selection system – working experience, scientific research, motivation letter, interview
- 6 years program
 - 9 months in public healthcare center
 - 1,5-2 years central hospital
 - 2-3 years university hospital
 - 6 months in a surgery department
- Final exam

Croatian residency program

Basic program: 14 months

- Abdominal surgery: 3 months
- Breast surgery: 2 weeks
- Urology: 2 months
- Anesthesiology: 1 month
- Neonatal medicine: 1 month
- US: 3.5 months
- Laboratory : 2 weeks
- Genetics: 2 weeks
- Pathology : 2 weeks
- Cytology: 2 weeks
- Transfusion: 2 weeks
- Radiology: 2 weeks

Obstetrics: 14 months

- Delivery room: 8 months
- Pathology of pregnancy dept: 5 months
- Outpatient clinic: 1 month

Gynecology: 20 months

- Gynecological surgery; 11 months
- Gynecological oncology; 4 months
- Urogynecology: 2 months
- Pediatric gynecology: 1 month
- Outpatient department; 2 months

Reproductive gynecology and endocrinology: 7 months

- Payed leave: 5 months
- Postgraduate obligatory studies: 3 months

Slavery resident contracts in Croatia

Novi Pravilnik o specijalizacijama loš, nejasan i nepravedan

Šta novi Pravilnik donosi specijalizacijama i mladim specijalistima?

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Zagreb, Croatia | • Lublin, Poland |
| • Population: 1 mil | • Population 300 000 |
| • Tertiary care center | • Tertiary care center |
| • 3200 deliveries/year | • 2900 deliveries/year |
| • CS rate: 28.7 % | • CS rate: 59 % |
| • Vacuum, PH metry | • No vacuum, no PH metry |
| • No forceps | • No forceps |
| • Extraperitoneal CS | |



THANK YOU

If you have stayed with me this far in my narration of my ENTOG exchange experience, thank you very much. I look forward to connecting more trainees in Ireland to ENTOG as the ENTOG Representative.

There are many exciting opportunities that ENTOG can offer to all O&G NCHDs – please get in touch with me if you want to find out more!

Mei Yee, Ng

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