

GSCN Travel Award Report

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Conference: European Hematology Association (EHA) 2022 Hybrid Congress.

Place and Date: Vienna, Austria from June 9th till June 12th, 2022

First of all, I would like to thank the GSCN to support my participation at the European Hematology Association (EHA) 2022 Hybrid Congress in Vienna. After the last EHA congress in 2020 and 2021 had to take place virtually due to the Corona Pandemic, this year, the congress took place as a hybrid event. EHA is the largest European-based organization connecting medical professionals, researchers, and scientists that bring you the latest updates in the field of stem cells and hematology. This was my first time to attend and present in an international conference during my time as a PhD student. Due to the Pandemic I have not been able to attend a conference in person, presenting my own work. Having the chance to attend EHA has been an amazingly stimulating opportunity to interact and network with people whom I usually only know from publications. The four-day conference covered all aspects of basic stem cell, clinical as well as industrial research. Many of the educational and scientific working group sessions included speakers from different backgrounds and thereby attract both basic researchers and clinicians to the same session. In addition to many industrial satellite symposiums where new and exciting trials and approaches were presented. This offered a great platform for learning about the advances in hematology research from all aspects and enhance the networking between basic, clinical as well as industrial researchers. As a basic researcher myself I learnt a lot about key updates about CAR-T cell therapy and the latest treatments which are targeted towards gene mutations which is very exciting to learn about.

On the first day, I attended the YoungEHA Research Meeting (YERM) which brings all young hematologists together, giving a great opportunity for boosting connections between young hematologists. The YERM consisted of 5 sessions focusing on several topics, in which I was specifically interested in the session “Metabolism in homeostasis and disorders”. I found the work presented by Yu Wei Zhang very interesting, where I learned about the existence and relevance of dormancy in human HSCs and the role of hyaluronic acid-GPRC5C signaling axis in controlling the HSC state. On the second day I attended the Molecular Hematopoiesis workshop which included several talks covering the latest scientific results in signaling, normal and malignant hematopoietic stem cells, microenvironment, transcription and epigenetic regulation. I found of particular interest some talks like “C/EBPα confers dependence to fatty acid anabolic pathways and vulnerability to lipid oxidative stress” by Jean-Emmanuel Sarry that highlighted novel role of the transcription factor C/EBPα on lipid homeostasis.

I had the great chance to present my work during the poster session. I presented my poster entitled “Unbiased, Longitudinal Analysis of the Inflammatory Response of HSPCS at the Single Cell Level Resolves Controversies Regarding the HSPCS Stress Response” on June 10th. It was an invaluable opportunity to share the details of my work with leading scientists and receive valuable feedback.

In addition to the science talks, I attended workshop on Grant Writing, in which I learnt how to take the first steps into preparing a successful grant application and what is important when writing a grant. This was very useful for me as I am towards the end of my PhD and planning to start a postdoctoral study, in which I will need to write grant proposals. In addition, I learnt about many grant applications offered by EHA.

In conclusion, as a first-time attendee to a scientific conference, I was very impressed with the size of the exhibition and number of attendees which was about 10,000 participants coming from all over the world to bring the latest updates and discuss cutting edge research in the field of stem cells and hematology. I would like to thanks the GSCN for choosing me as Travel Award Winner and offering financial support to attend this conference.