

GSCN Travel Award Report

ISEH 55th Annual Scientific Meeting, Frankfurt, Germany, 27 – 30 August 2026

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The 55th Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society for Experimental Hematology (ISEH) took place in Frankfurt, Germany, bringing together basic researchers and clinician scientists working across different fields of haematology from all around the world. Compared with other haematology meetings, ISEH is a relatively small conference, which creates a very interactive atmosphere and offers many opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with both leaders and junior researchers in the field. It was also a great opportunity to reconnect with old friends and colleagues, some of whom I hadn't seen in years, and explore potential future career opportunities in Germany as I start thinking about my next steps.

For me, this year's meeting was particularly interesting because there were many presentations on two areas closely related to my own research: the bone marrow microenvironment and clonal haematopoiesis (CH). I was excited to see several new findings showing how dynamic the bone marrow niche is across very different conditions. This included work showing that sickle cell disease perturbs the bone marrow microenvironment, that leukaemic stem cells themselves can remodel the bone marrow niche, and new approaches to treating bone marrow fibrosis in myelofibrosis. I was also intrigued by the presentation by Sid Jaiswal reporting the detection of clonal haematopoiesis in microglia in the human brain, which might actually be protective against Alzheimer's disease, highlighting the potential relevance of CH for many aspects of human health during ageing.

One of my personal scientific highlights was Anastasia Tikhonova's presentation on the human bone marrow niche in clonal haematopoiesis. She presented beautiful spatial transcriptomics data showing that the changes occurring in CH bone marrow are highly localised. Certain fibroblast populations characterised by inflammatory signatures expand and form fibrotic areas around sinusoids, while other areas of the same bone marrow remain largely unaffected. I found this spatial perspective particularly illuminating and very relevant to my own work.

Another highlight was the Janet Rowley Award Lecture by Beth Psaila, who gave a very engaging talk about her research on megakaryocytes and myeloproliferative neoplasms. It was particularly interesting to see how her work connects fundamental questions about megakaryocyte biology and the bone marrow environment with clinically relevant questions in MPNs and beyond.

This year's ISEH provided more opportunities than ever for early career researchers to present their work. It started with the pre-meeting workshop organised by the ISEH New Investigator Committee and continued with talks by PhD students and postdocs throughout the concurrent scientific sessions, as well as short poster teaser presentations, where presenters had the opportunity to introduce their work to the audience for two minutes before the poster sessions. After giving my own poster teaser, I received a lot of interest in my project, which led to many fruitful discussions at my poster. For me, these conversations were one of the most valuable

parts of the meeting and a good example of the interactive atmosphere that makes ISEH special.

Overall, I really enjoyed my time at ISEH 2026. The meeting gave me plenty of new scientific ideas and perspectives that are relevant to my own research, and it provided the opportunity to discuss my work, make new connections and explore possible future directions for both my research and career. I am very grateful to the GSCN for supporting my attendance at ISEH 2026 through a travel award.

Sincerely,

Susann Rahmig