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German Stem Cell Network

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Report on Annual Scientific Meeting of “International Society for Experimental Hematology” in Edinburgh, Scotland 2022.

I am writing this report to acknowledge the support of German Stem Cell Network organization in form of “Travel award” so that I would be able to attend the annual scientific conference of the International Society for Experimental Hematology (ISEH). This year, the conference was organized in the historical, old-town environment of Edinburgh International Conference Centre in Scotland from 1st to 4th September. And it provided a unique opportunity for a huge intellectually, scientifically and internationally diverse community of scientists to meet and discuss the latest scientific observations in the basic and clinical (translational) areas of hematopoietic (blood) stem cell (HSC) biology. The scientific diversity can be envisioned by the fact that the conference was attended by ~500 registered attendees (~450 in-person attendances), including 262 abstract submissions from 265 PhD and Post-Doc scientists.

Before I discuss the scientific aspects of this conference, I would like to highlight the para-scientific and yet important observations from the conference. In last two years, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference was organized in virtual format with immense efforts from the organizers. However, we have learned this year that, scientists from all-over the world prefer in-person attendance in comparison to the virtual connections. And in-person attendance is a crucial aspect to breed and stimulate the scientific discussions and networking opportunities.

Like previous years, the conference was attended by scientists at both ends of the expertise spectrum including junior PhDs (with fresh and innovative ideas) as well as senior Professors (with expert outlook and long-term scientific visions) from reputable institutions world-wide. I availed this opportunity to discuss my scientific results with notable group leaders including Professors Bertie Göttgens (University of Cambridge, UK), James Palis (University of Rochester, US), Ellen Rothenberg (Caltech, US) and Emery Bresnick (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

During the conference registration, I had submitted my research work on the role of GATA2-GATA1 switch in erythropoiesis in form of an abstract. Fortunately, the abstract was scored among the top 3 Post-Doc abstracts and I was provided the opportunity to deliver the talk during the “New Young Investigator Awards session” chaired by Prof. Adam Wilkinson (University of Oxford, UK). It was a 10 minutes talk followed by 3 minutes of Q & As. Lately, I was fortunate enough to be ranked first in the awards session and was honored with the Certificate from Prof. Andrew Elefanty (President of ISEH). Efforts like that from ISEH play a huge role in building-up and maintaining the motivation of young scientists to contribute to the academic world.

In addition to that, there were very interesting talks from Professors Leighton Grimes and Berthold Göttgens on the novel sequencing approaches to understand hematopoietic stem cell fate decisions, Prof. Matt Porteus on novel ex vivo genome editing of hematopoietic stem cells for translational applications and Prof. James Palis on the origin of blood cells in the embryos. Finally, at the end of her presentation, Prof. Louise Purton also highlighted the gender inequality issues in the academic world which received the standing ovation from the whole ISEH community.

In summary, after 2 years of virtual conferences, ISEH this year was a sigh of relief for fans of in-person meetings and the scientific as well as social events provided a huge mix of discussions and networking opportunities. Importantly, I am highly grateful to the GSCN to facilitate the experience of ISEH in form of the GSCN travel award. It was, undoubtedly, a valuable experience and I highly request GSCN to continue efforts like that in the future especially for young scientists.

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