

REPORT

International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) 2025 Annual Meeting

11-14 June 2025 (Hong Kong, China)

I recently had the pleasure to attend The International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) 2025 Annual Meeting. This meeting is organized yearly in a different part of the world, and this year it was held in vibrant Hong Kong, welcoming around 2500 participants from 58 different countries, including researchers, industry professionals, journal editors, policymakers and clinicians.

The experience was enriching in many ways, but particularly because it allowed me to engage with international group leaders and trainees working with stem cells biology and developmental research, opening new paths to potential future collaborations and new ideas relevant to my research. During the meeting, plenary sessions and concurrent sessions were held, covering a wide range of topics related to stem cells, from advancements in fundamental discoveries to clinical data and new technologies.

One of the talks I found most inspiring was by Paola Arlotta (Harvard University), recipient of the 2025 ISSCR Momentum Award. Her lab uses 3D cerebral organoids to study the cellular diversity and complexity of the developing cerebral cortex. She presented impressive work demonstrating how human brain organoids in long-term culture (for years) can generate cellular diversity, mimicking natural development, and achieve advanced maturation.

Another particularly interesting talk was given by Tao Tan (Kunming University of Science and Technology), who presented on *ex utero* embryogenesis of non-human primate embryos. His lab has developed culture systems that allow monkey blastocysts to grow until early organogenesis, creating a platform that can be used to study developmental stages in primates that are otherwise inaccessible in humans, due to technical and ethical reasons.

Moreover, a conference highlight for me was being selected to present my work in a short talk during the “*In vivo* and *in vitro* organ generation” session. This opportunity gave me significant visibility and led to engaging discussions with other researchers working in similar areas, as well as with journal editors. Additionally, in this same session, I was very impressed by the talks from Xiling Shen (University of Texas) and Hiromitsu Nakauchi (Stanford University and Institute of Science Tokyo) about interspecies chimera formation, not only as a platform for understanding fundamental biology, but also as a potential platform for future organ generation.

Finally, I am sincerely grateful to have been awarded the GSCN Travel Award, which made it possible for me to attend this meeting. This experience has been a valuable opportunity to present and shape my current research in front of leading experts in the field, while also interacting with fellow researchers in a way that goes beyond our everyday environment.

Sincerely,

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