

GSCN Travel Award Report

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The ISSCR Annual Meeting 2026 took place in a truly impressive venue in the vibrant city of Montréal, Canada. The conference brought together stem cell experts from academia, research institutes and industry across all topics and from all parts of the world to discuss the newest advances in stem cell research and technologies, developmental biology, disease modelling, and translational applications.

The meeting was fully opened by Shinya Yamanaka, whose keynote lecture was both inspiring and grounding. He guided the audience from the early days of iPSC technology to current challenges and opportunities on the path toward clinical application. From there, the conference unfolded into the full breadth of the stem cell field: somatic stem cells, disease modeling, large iPSC repositories from across the world, and research programs that are now approaching real patient impact.

The scientific program featured outstanding talks from established leaders as well as impressive contributions from early-career researchers. Topics ranged from organoids and high-throughput technologies to basic research and proof-of-concept studies. It was fascinating to see how the field is moving more and more towards clinical translation by addressing key questions such as iPS-repositories including different ethnicities, scalability, quality control, and good manufacturing practice.

With around 1,500 posters, the poster sessions offered an exceptional opportunity to meet scientists who are genuinely excited about stem cell research. Presenting my own poster was a highlight: I received valuable input and engaged in stimulating discussions about how patient-specific iPSC models can be leveraged for future drug-screening applications.

The networking events, especially the WunderBar Evening of the GSCN, provided a wonderful atmosphere to connect with new colleagues, exchange ideas, and enjoy an inspiring night.

Overall, this conference demonstrated how vast, promising, and full of potential the stem cell field is – and how each of us contributes only a small part to answer big questions and bringing personalized stem-cell-based medicine closer to clinical reality. It was a great pleasure to connect with so many scientists globally. I am sincerely grateful to the GSCN for supporting my participation in ISSCR 2026, enabling me to gain this experience and return home with many new ideas and impulses for future projects.

Best regards,

Anika Neureiter