

Society for Reproduction and Fertility Travel Grant Award 2015

Recipient: Karen Kilcoyne, Post-doctoral researcher

Supervisor: Prof Richard Sharpe

Conference: 8th Copenhagen Workshop on Endocrine Disrupters

Thank you to the SRF for awarding me a travel grant to attend the above conference in Copenhagen, Denmark on 27th April – 30th May 2015. There were approximately fifty oral presentations from worldwide key speakers and 66 poster presentations, all in the field of endocrine disruption.

The meeting focused on how environmental factors affect the endocrine system and hormone related functions. The focus of research, as shown by oral and poster presentations, were particularly in humans although also included animal and experimental data. Environmental factors e.g. lifestyle, pharmacology and environmental chemicals were discussed in detail, as well as how all of the above may affect genetic aspects. There was an additional session which included the sex-dimorphic-effects of endocrine disrupters. The topics covered were hugely relevant to my research on reproductive development in early life and particularly developmental effects and epigenetic changes from endocrine disrupters.

During one of the lunch breaks, I was given the opportunity to have a tour of the scientific labs at Rigshospitalet and shadowed some novel techniques by a senior scientist. I am currently employing the same techniques in my lab at the moment, in collaboration with the lab in Denmark.

There were also two dedicated evening poster sessions which provided ample opportunity to discuss overlapping research. I was able to discuss my work with world experts in the field, while also learning about how endocrine disruption in reproductive organs can overlap/affect other organs. This demonstrated the impact all of our accumulating research is having on developing understanding of the endocrine disruption field.

Overall the conference was an excellent experience which broadened my knowledge of the current field of endocrine disruption research. I'm extremely grateful to the SRF for awarding me this travel grant and thus providing me with this invaluable opportunity.