

## **Society for Reproduction and Fertility Travel Grant Award 2013**

Recipient: Lorraine Frew, PhD Student

Supervisors: Dr Sarah Stock, Professor Jane Norman, Dr Donald Davidson

Conference: Gordon Research Conference; Antimicrobial Peptides

Thank you to the SRF for awarding me a travel grant to attend the above conference in Venture, California, USA on 24<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013. This international Gordon Research Conference had over 50 oral presentations from worldwide key speakers and over 120 poster presentations all in the field of antimicrobial peptides.

The meeting focused in the most recent discovery in antimicrobial peptide research, covering a wide range of topics, including structure and function analysis, expression and regulation, antimicrobial actions and mechanisms, microbial resistance strategies, health and disease related immunomodulatory functions, and development on antimicrobial peptides as therapeutics. I had the opportunity to present some of the work from my PhD in a poster presentation entitled “Determining expression of cervical antimicrobial peptides in early pregnancy and their relationship with pregnancy outcome”. It was an excellent opportunity to discuss my work with world experts in the field. I received positive feedback on my work which led to many stimulating discussions on future work from this data, including some new collaborations.

Preceding the conference there was a two day seminar meeting for graduate students and post-doctoral scientists. This was a unique forum that allowed me to interact with other scientists with comparable levels of experience, allowing us to present and exchange our data in an informal and more relaxed environment before the main conference began. This was a great opportunity to network with other PhD students and get feedback from those working in similar areas without the scary professors being around! There was a mixture of oral presentations and poster sessions alongside several social events that got us all interacting and discussing our work.

Overall the conference was an excellent experience which broadened my knowledge of the field of antimicrobial research which will be invaluable as I embark on writing my thesis. I'm extremely grateful to the SRF for awarding me this travel grant which allowed me to meet leading experts in the field and make friend with scientists in this area.