

REPORT

Re: SRF Travel Grant Funding contributing towards the attendance at SSR 2013 in Montreal Canada.

From 22/07/2013 to 26/07/2013 I attended the Society for the Study of Reproduction Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada. This society is the premier society in the field of reproductive biology, encompassing research in human and animal reproduction on infertility, contraception, pregnancy, basic mechanisms controlling reproductive function as well as reproductive immunology.

At this meeting I presented my work on the endogenous induction of miR223 by sperm in the female reproductive tract and was a co-author on an abstract presented by Prof Sarah Robertson. I was fortunate enough to be given a platform presentation in a module session specifically focussing on Reproductive Tract Immunology. In these sessions, two invited experts in the field presented an overview of their work with a more junior scientist presenting a short platform presentation in between. Overall, the presentation was successful with the feedback and comments regarding our work being very positive and people were very interested to see this published in the near future.

In addition to presenting, I attended this conference as a member of the trainee affairs committee of the SSR. I joined this group in 2012 in order to not only become involved in the society but also as I felt that committee membership would give me the opportunity to interact with more senior, established researchers in the society. My specific role within this committee is to be the trainee representative in the publications committee which oversees the development and expansion of the society's journal, *Biology of Reproduction*.

A new initiative that was taken by the society for this year's meeting was to introduce a trainee mentor luncheon where trainees could nominate to have lunch to discuss their work with a number of senior research leaders. For this event, I chose to have lunch with Dr. Jackson Kirkman-Brown who is an expert in sperm-female reproductive tract interactions from the University of Birmingham. His work is particularly relevant to our work as our studies have shown that sperm induce a number of immunological changes in the female reproductive tract. Our results have suggested a number of potential mechanisms that sperm may be inducing these changes but we are yet to begin this work. As such, we were able to discuss the results from our work thus far and receive advice from Jackson as to how to progress with this work and identify sperm signalling agents.

In conclusion, it was a successful conference with a diverse programme that reflected the focuses in the field of reproductive biology. This conference has given me many ideas for future study and I feel it has also greatly improved my knowledge in this topic. I express my gratitude towards the society for its generous support in contributing towards my attendance at this conference allowing me to further develop my research career.

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