

Society for the Study of Reproduction Annual Meeting

13th-16th July 2017, Washington DC, USA.

With generous support from the SRF, I was able to attend the 50th Annual Meeting of the SSR, at the Marriott Wardman Park, Washington DC in July 2018. The theme of the 2018 Golden Anniversary meeting was '*50 years of research: looking back and moving forward*'. The programme, expertly compiled by Dr Kate Loveland and Dr Jacques Tremblay, achieved the impressive feat of combining both scientific breadth and depth, with multiple themes running through the programme comprised of several focussed symposia each. Of particular note were the gonadal development/function and epigenetics strands: Dr Lane Christenson (University of Kansas) gave an enlightening talk on the role of extracellular vesicles in follicle development, adding another organ to the burgeoning list of structures influenced by these enigmatic particles. Hiroyuki Sasaki (Kyushu University, Japan) and Xin Chen (Johns Hopkins University, USA) gave excellent presentation on the importance of epigenetic regulation in specific and maintaining germline stem cells in mammals and *Drosophila* respectively. Lastly, Katsuhiko Hiyashi (Kyushu University) presented a technical tour de force on his work reconstituting the female germ line from ES cells.

Prof Azim Surani (University of Cambridge, UK) delivered a keynote address on germ cell specification in humans, highlighting the fundamental differences between primordial germ cell specification in rodents and larger mammals, using a combination of porcine embryos and human ES cell models. This was complemented by an excellent talk by Prof Rene Reijo Pera (Montana State University, USA) outlining the early stages of human fetal gametogenesis using a combination of human stem cell and embryonic cell models.

A large number of short talks drawn from submitted abstracts and a vast array of posters (some of which were presented as three-minute flash talks in a new session before the meeting proper) ensured extensive participation and engagement for scientists at all levels in the meeting. Based on the excellent attendance and superb science, the next fifty years of this meeting looks very promising.

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