

## SRF travel grant report

**Recipient:** Sarah Niamh Sayers

**Position/institution:** 2<sup>nd</sup> year PhD student, Institute of Reproductive and Developmental Biology, Imperial College London

**Conference:** Fourwaves GPCR Retreat 2019

**Date/location of the conference:** September 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> 2019, Bromont, Quebec, Canada

I am really pleased to have been given the opportunity to attend my first international conference in Bromont, Quebec. The thought of getting to share my research with world-leaders of my field was an ultimate goal of mine.

My research is based around the action and regulation of the follicle-stimulating hormone receptor (FSHR), a receptor key in reproduction. FSHR is part of the family of G protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs), the largest family of signalling receptors in humans. In the poster I was chosen to present I was testing compound drug action on FSHR signalling and regulation.

The theme of the conference was all about GPCRs, so was highly specific to my field and relevant to my PhD research. There were sections of the conference on the structural and dynamic aspects of GPCRs, GPCR signalling and trafficking, physiology and model organisms, drug discovery, and the non-conventional aspects of GPCRs. It was great to see world-leading experts in each of these sections talk about the research they are doing in their labs and learn and get ideas from them. A specific highlight for me was getting to see two Nobel Laureates in my field, Robert Lefkowitz and Brian Kobilka, talk about their careers in GPCR research and how the field has developed over the years.

There were therefore many benefits to me for attending GPCR Retreat 2019 for my own personal growth as a researcher. For example, I had the opportunity to present my first poster at an international conference, this entailed being questioned on my techniques used and critiqued on the fundamental aspects of my specific GPCR's biology. In addition to this, the opportunity offered me ideas for future projects from the talks given, and suggestions for the future direction of my project from the questions posed to me during the presenting of my poster.

This amazing opportunity would not have been possible without the generous support of the SRF travel grant I was in receipt of – I am very grateful for SRF allowing me this fantastic opportunity.