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AWARDEE REPORT FORM

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| NAME | | Clara Deady | | |
| TWITTER HANDLE\* *optional* | | @clara\_deady | | |
| UNIVERSITY | | University College Cork, Ireland | | |
| NAME OF AWARD | | Symington Bequest | | |
| PURPOSE OF AWARD *conference/event attended/organised (full name) with city and dates.* | | | | |
| To attend the 36th ECNP Congress (Neuroscience applied) from October 7th – 10th 2023 , held in Barcelona, Spain | | | | |
| REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| My main anticipated benefit of attending this conference was to present my poster which details the relationship between maternal immune activation and maternal gut dysbiosis during pregnancy in a rat model. This included both behavioural data from the offspring, along with gross and neuroanatomical changes seen. Building upon this, I also hoped to be able to network with researchers in a similar field to my own. This would allow me to gain their feedback, suggestions, and possible new ideas regarding my own research. I also anticipated to discuss this research with clinicians, who would hopefully be able to provide me with a new perspective on my findings and potentially allow for conversations as to how my findings would resonate in the clinic.  Finally, I aimed to attend the lectures, symposia, and the more intimate workshops that were being run by world-renowned scientists and clinicians in areas that I am both well versed in, and areas outside the scope of my PhD. I hoped that this would allow me to broaden my horizon in various aspects of neuroscience and as well as inform me of the newest technologies that are being utilised in some of the leading universities around the world. | | | | |
| COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar/ event.  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| Attending the ECNP Congress in Barcelona was an outstanding experience. It was so well run and well  organised. There was 4 full days of plenary talks, symposia, and more interactive ‘campfire’ sessions that  covered all aspects of neuroscience. Some particular highlights for me included the development of  organoids and their potential use by Prof. Sergiu Pasca, how we make and break memories by Prof. Sheena  Josselyn, and the importance of the microbiome in health and disease by Prof. John Cryan. I was particularly  fascinated by the talks focusing on women’s health and the perinatal period as those resonated closest with  my own research.  On the final day of the conference, I presented my research in the form of a poster. The poster attracted  multiple other preclinical researchers, along with a few clinicians. I believe that the broad mix of people  there was one of the strengths on the conference. As someone who is only used to discussing their findings  with other basic researchers, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to speak to those who work in the clinic  and have first-hand experience of women suffering from pregnancy complications. These discussions not  only provided me with new connections but provided me with different perspectives and interpretations of  my work and multiple new ideas on where to go with my research. | | | | |
| REPORT: In relation to skills, what were the most important things you gained? *(does not apply to equipment grant.* For public engagement/outreach awards what did your audience gain and how did you evaluate success?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| Through attending this conference, I believe that the most valuable skills that I have acquired all revolve around effective communication. These include public speaking and presenting my work in a succinct and engaging manner. However, the most significant skill that I gained perhaps being able to convey my research to an audience without prior knowledge of animal models. Prior to this experience, I had not had the opportunity to engage with clinicians that had limited, if any, experience with various behavioural tests and postmortem analysis. This ability to bridge the gap between my specialised knowledge and general understanding has broadened my horizons. It has allowed me to be become a more effective communicator and educator.  These skills are not confined to the realm of academia; they will not only accompany me through the rest of my PhD journey, but also any further positions I hold. The ability to engage people from diverse backgrounds, to captivate their interest, and to make complex topics accessible is a key skill that was practiced by all the speakers at the conference and allowed me to understand complicated concepts and pathways. I hope that I am able to build upon this new skill and put it into practice at future conferences. | | | | |
| REPORT: How do you think you will put this learning experience into practice in the future? For public engagement/outreach awards how with the materials/knowledge generated by this activity be used in the future?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| At this conference, I found the multiple discussions with preclinical researchers and clinicians to be immensely enriching and rewarding. The confidence and public speaking skills that I have gained will of course aid in the progression of my PhD. Separately, these interactions have provided me with such valuable insights and fresh perspectives regarding the potential directions for my research, one specific interest being a potential follow-up animal study building upon our previous findings. The feedback and ideas shared during these discussions have the potential to shape the future of my research.  Due to the wide range of topics that were presented and discussed at the conference, I aim to incorporate these exciting and novel technologies and ideas into my own work. I will aim to make my work as translatable as possible through both *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies. I hope that I will be able to discuss this further with clinicians in my own university in hopes to keep bridging the gap between preclinical research and clinical practice, as I found this to be hugely beneficial and one of my main takeaways from this conference.  Furthermore, a key topic of the conference was the importance of biological sex as a factor in both animal and human studies, I found this to be enlightening. Following this, I will ensure that biological sex will always be incorporated into any future studies of mine, in hoping to make neuroscience research more inclusive, and will encourage my colleagues to do the same. | | | | |
| Data Protection/GDPR: I consent to the data included in this submission being collected, processed and stored by the Anatomical Society. Answer YES or NO in the Box below | | | | |
| YES | | | | |
| Graphical Images: If you include graphical images you must obtain consent from people appearing in any photos and confirm that you have consent. A consent statement from you must accompany each report if relevant. A short narrative should accompany the image. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below | | | | |
| N/A | | | | |
| Copyright: If you submit images you must either own the copyright to the image or have gained the explicit permission of the copyright holder for the image to be submitted as part of the report for upload to the Society’s website, Newsletter, social media and so forth. A copyright statement must accompany each report if relevant. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below | | | | |
| N/A | | | | |
| SIGNATURE | Clara Deady | | DATE | 31.10.2023 |

*If submitted electronically, a type-written name is acceptable in place of a hand-written signature*

*File: AS-Award-Report-Form-171023*