# ANATOMICAL SOCIETY

# Awardee Report Form

| NAME | Francesca Pieropan |
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| UNIVERSITY | University of Portsmouth |
| NAME OF AWARD | Symington Bequest Fund Award |

**PURPOSE OF AWARD** *conference attended (full name) with city and dates*

Society for Neuroscience-Washington DC 14th-19th November 2014

**REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits?**

The Society for Neuroscience conference is the biggest international meeting regarding the understanding of the nervous system. The conference is held each year in the US and this year was in Washington DC from the 14th to the 19th of November. It brought together more than 31000 researchers from all around the world and from various disciplines including biology, bioengeneering and psychology. My abstract was accepted for a poster presentation and thanks to the Symington Bequest fund award that was granted to me by the Anatomical society I had the opportunity to present my research at this event. I was aiming to meet researchers currently using a number of techniniques that would be useful for my PhD and eventually set the ground for future collaborations.

**COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar.**

On the 14th of November I attended the Neurobiology of Disease workshop which was one of many satellite events included in the conference program. It was really interesting to hear about the different approaches towards a number of neurological diseases such as stroke, dementia and multiple sclerosis. Notably one of the talks was given by a doctor who suffered a stroke several years ago and presented clinical data gained during his recovery. Symposia and poster sessions were an invaluable opportunity to expand my knowledge and engage in interesting conversations. Most interestingly, I had the chance to study numerous posters regarding flavonoids' activities as sedatives and neuroprotective agents, demyelination and optic nerve crush injury models which will be really interesting for my project. My poster presentation on the effects of the flavon-3-ol epicatechin in inducing oligodendrogenesis in the adult optic nerve gave me the chance to talk about my research project with several PIs and researchers gaining positive feedback and new interesting ideas for future experiments. I also had the opportunity to network with researchers working in Padua, Turin, Chicago, New York and Florida, all focusing on different optic nerve crush injury and demyelinating/remyelinating models. I also attended 2 socials: the Journal of Neurophysiology and the neuron-glia interaction socials. These more informal events were the perfect moment to discuss common research interests and to set the ground for future collaborations.
The presidential lecture on "Stem cells in the brain: glial identity and niches" presented by Prof. Fiona Doetsch introduced and addressed a number of questions related to neural stem cells and glia in the brain. Her research on characterization of quiescent and active neural stem cells was quite fascinating.

**REPORT: In relation to skills, what were the most important things you gained?** *(does not apply to equipment grant)*

I believe my networking and presenting skills have definitely improved. In such a big conference I presented my project, answered several questions and defended my work. Being now really close to the end of my PhD, this was definitely a good exercise in preparation to the VIVA.

**REPORT: How do you think you will put this learning experience into practice in the future?**

I am truly grateful to the Anatomical Society for giving me the opportunity to attend this conference. I have learnt more about culture techniques and models of demyelination which I am definitely going to apply in my future experiments. This was actually the first aim for me at this meeting. I definitely had the opportunity to network hopefully I will soon have the possibility to visit those labs and learn new techniques. Overall it was a priceless experience both on personal and professional levels.

| SIGNATURE | Francesca Pieropan | DATE | 01/12/2014 |
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*If submitted electronically, a type-written name is acceptable in place of a hand-written signature*