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AWARDEE REPORT FORM

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| NAME | | Benjamin Davies | | |
| TWITTER HANDLE\* *optional* | |  | | |
| UNIVERSITY | | University of Cambridge | | |
| NAME OF AWARD | | International Conference for Anatomical Society funded PhD student | | |
| PURPOSE OF AWARD *conference/event attended/organised (full name) with city and dates.* | | | | |
| Mammary Gland Biology- Gordon Research Seminar (01/06/24 – 02/06/24)  Mammary Gland Biology- Gordon Research Conference (02/06/24 – 07/06/24)  Lucca (Barga), Italy | | | | |
| REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits?  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| The Gordon Conference in Mammary Gland Biology is one of the biggest scientific conferences in this research field. It attracts a large audience of mammary gland and breast cancer biology researchers, who present and discuss their most current and cutting-edge research. By attending this conference, I was aiming to expand my knowledge and stay up to date with the advancements within my specific field. This event is also attended by numerous top academics and principal investigators. Consequently, I was anticipating that this conference would be great for networking and building connections which could open up future career opportunities. At the conference I was presenting a poster on some of my PhD research recently published in the Journal of Anatomy. This research, which examines male mammary gland biology utilising non-traditional models, is relatively niche but by participating in such a well-attended event I anticipated that I would be able to showcase my findings to a large audience that was more specifically tailored to my research area. I was also hoping to develop my scientific communication skills through giving my poster presentation. Prior to the main conference I was also attending the Gordon Research Seminar which is a workshop for early career researchers. I was fortunate enough to be selected as a discussion leader for one of the seminar sessions. I was anticipating that this would be another great opportunity for further networking and that I would be able to share experiences and ideas with other researchers at a similar career level. | | | | |
| COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar/ event.  *Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.* | | | | |
| The conference was located in a fantastic and relatively remote hotel outside of the town of Barga, Italy. The isolated nature of the hotel was beneficial for keeping the attendees in one place, creating a supportive and community like atmosphere which greatly aided networking opportunities. The Gordon Research Seminar, which occurred prior to the main conference, was a very welcoming event and I thoroughly enjoyed the short talks by other early career researchers. The more relaxed discussions and questions that occurred after each talk were a fantastic chance to engage with other researchers, sharing ideas in a more informal environment. I presented my research poster at this seminar and had some great discussions with other PhD students who were using similar non-traditional animal models in their work. At this seminar, I also led one of the sessions as a discussion leader which allowed me to participate more actively.  The main Gordon Research Conference consisted of numerous 15- 40-minute talks and poster sessions that covered a wide range of topics. These talks were very informative and beneficial to my PhD research. There was a specific session titled ‘New Tools and Technologies in Mammary Gland and Breast Cancer.’ The talks in this session covered novel and exciting imaging technologies. Microscopy techniques are very important in my research and it was exciting and inspiring to think about how these new technologies could be applied to my PhD. There were further talks, from prominent academics, who discussed their use of ruminant models for mammary gland research. These alternative animal models are rarely discussed at smaller conference events. My PhD focusses on using similar models and it was interesting to hear about their use in different contexts.  The meals and coffee breaks at the conference were also very communal and networking between early career researchers and established academics was very easy and friendly. I presented my poster at multiple sessions during the conference and received very positive feedback and some insightful questions and comments. I am very grateful to the Anatomical Society for their generous support to attend this conference. | | | | |
| 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.* | | | | |
| Being selected as a discussion leader at the Gordon Research Seminar, was greatly beneficial to my scientific communication and engagement skills. I had little previous experience of leading discussions prior to this event, but it allowed me to actively participate and engage with the talks. It was necessary for me to construct and ask numerous questions to each speaker, which encouraged me to think more deeply about their research topics, even if they differed from my own research area.  My poster presentation was a further opportunity to practise my scientific communication skills. Previously, I was more experienced at speaking and presenting to a more general scientific audience. Through attending this highly specific mammary gland biology conference, I was more deeply questioned by researchers who were very knowledgeable about my field. As a result, I was able to practise being more detailed and precise in my scientific explanations of my research findings. Through the numerous networking opportunity at the conference, I have become more confident at approaching senior researchers and academics to discuss my research and to ask questions about their own work. I was also able to gain experience in concisely introducing my research project and conveying the importance and wider scientific implications of my work. | | | | |
| 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.* | | | | |
| Attending this conference has greatly improved my knowledge of the contemporary research that is occurring within mammary gland and breast cancer biology. Through networking and speaking to other early career researchers I have gained invaluable information about possible career paths and the opportunities that will be available to me when I complete my PhD. I feel I am more involved in the wider scientific community and have made several connections from this conference. I am hopeful that these connections could lead to future collaborations and be useful for my future career development.  Learning about the new and novel techniques to research mammary gland development has proved extremely useful to my own research and PhD project. The specific imaging techniques that were discussed at this conference will make for excellent topics to cover in my PhD thesis, as I discuss the future applications and directions that my research could potentially take.  Being able to effectively communicate my scientific findings and answer detailed questions from an audience knowledgeable about my specific research area will be extremely beneficial for my PhD viva exam.  I have developed my confidence in being more vocal in discussion sessions and to actively participate in the questions following talks. I hope to continue this at future conferences and seminars, as it is greatly beneficial to enhancing my own scientific knowledge and building connections with other researchers. | | | | |
| 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 | | | | |
| YES.  I have included a photo of myself with my conference poster. I am the only person in the photo. | | | | |
| 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 | | | | |
| YES. I own the image. | | | | |
| SIGNATURE | Benjamin Davies | | DATE | 23/06/24 |

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

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

*BD Report Website 250624*