

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/
Conference Title:** ENABLE Conference - the first European PhD and Postdoc
Symposium "Breaking Down Complexity: Innovative models and
techniques in biomedicine"

Travel Dates: 14th to 19th of November 2017

Location: Barcelona, Spain

Group member(s): Roberta Ilaria Amendola

Aims: Presenting my work in an international conference, networking and
exploring the possibilities outside of academia

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):

On the 15th to the 17th of November I attended the first European PhD and PostDoc symposium, held in Barcelona and organised by students of four institutes: the IRB of Barcelona, the SEMM of Milan, the RILMS of Nijmegen and the CPR of Copenhagen.

The conference was organised on three days. The first day was focused on exploring career options, specifically aimed to show opportunities outside of academia. The following two days were a more classic scientific conference, with keynote speakers and short talks.

During the career day, various activities were available. I attended a workshop on technology transfer and patenting. We had a chance to talk to an entrepreneur, who gave us insights on how drug discovery works, stimulated an interesting discussion on pharmaceutical companies and explained the process necessary to patent an idea. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to chat with two professionals. The first professional, Anna Serra, was a Biochemistry PhD graduate, who worked for a start-up and currently in the Barcelona Science Park as business and communication manager. The second was Daniela Ruffel, graduated from EMBL and currently an editor for a scientific journal. This was a great opportunity to ask questions and have a portrait of their jobs on a daily base. Finally, there was time to explore the career fair, in which representatives of companies were available to give information on what they did and any available job. Overall, I gain a lot of knowledge on such a different work environment, on how to apply for a multitude of different positions and also I collected contacts I will be able to use in the future.

During the following two days, the scientific symposium was held. Due to the nature of the meeting, the sessions covered a big range of topics. The keynote speakers gave amazing talks about their latest discoveries, but I very much appreciated listening to the short-talks gave by PhD students. This helped creating a more interactive atmosphere, where asking questions was less intimidating than it would normally be in an international Symposium of the same size. Finally, as my poster was selected, I presented it during the first day of the scientific symposium. Thanks to this, I had very challenging and inspiring conversation with other researchers, working in the same field. During the second day, I could go and talk to more poster presenters and entertain very interesting conversions.

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Overall, this meeting was a great experience on a professional level, especially at this point of my PhD. It was a unique opportunity to discuss about science and also with people who took a step away from the academic environment.