

# JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

## REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/**

**Conference Title:** 2016 International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) Annual meeting

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**Travel Dates:** 22<sup>nd</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> June 2016

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**Location:** San Francisco, USA

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**Group member(s):** Anahi Binagui-Casas

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**Aims:** Poster presentation, networking and attendance to scientific talks

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**OUTCOME (not less than 300 words): -**

The ISSCR Annual meeting is the largest and most prestigious stem cell and regenerative medicine conference in the world. It gathered over 4,000 attendees, including both academia and industry. The program was composed of 150 talks (plenary and concurrent) on different topics within the stem cell field, poster sessions, and networking events. Because of such a great variety of interesting and exciting talks, I could choose between different parallel sessions to get a flavour of the cutting-edge research in stem cells.

On the second day of the conference, I presented a poster with some of my work about the role of the VEGF pathway in haematopoietic stem cell development in the mouse embryo. It was the first time I presented my data in such a big meeting and it turned out to be a very enriching experience.

As it was an international event, I met and talked to different researchers (PhDs, postdocs and even PIs!) working in different labs around the globe. I enjoyed chatting about my findings, discussing/gaining feedback from people with different scientific backgrounds; and more importantly, receiving many comments and ideas that will hopefully help me get important results for my PhD project.

Apart from the poster session in which I presented, other highlights of the conference were the social “night out” and networking events organised by the society. It was at these events where I chatted in a more casual way with many people I have known by reading their

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papers. I especially enjoyed introducing myself to top-notch PIs and postdocs working in the same field as me. The organisers also prepared “lunch with the PI” sessions where students could sign up for a table with a PI of interest and have lunch with them.

I signed up for 2 of these lunches, with John Dick and Connie Eaves, two very well-known researchers in the hematopoietic field. I really liked the Q&A format of the event, where 6 students sitting on the table would ask questions or advice to the PIs.

Overall, attending this meeting was a very inspirational experience. It helped me gain confidence and taking the courage to network in a big event. I also learned about the latest findings in many other topics other than my own- broadening my knowledge in the stem cell field and helping me decide what I would like to continue working on after graduation.

I am very grateful for the generous financial support I received from the James Rennie Bequest. It would not have been possible for me to travel to San Francisco without this travel fund.