

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION / PROJECT / CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/
Conference Title:** 31ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON YEAST GENETICS
AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY ICYGMB31

Travel Dates: 19-26th August 2023

Location: Florence, Italy

Group member(s): Weronika Danecka

Aims: Present my work at the ICYGMB31 conference, explore further
career opportunities, network with experts in the field of yeast biology

Photography consent form attached: Yes
(please refer to your award letter) No

OUTCOME (a minimum of 500 words):-

The 31st International Conference on Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology (ICYGMB31) was the first conference focusing on different aspects of yeast biology that I attended during my PhD. It gave me an opportunity to present my work linking posttranscriptional regulation and yeast evolutionary biology, and to interact with my peers and experts in the field. The conference took place on 20-25th of August 2023 in Florence, Italy, and included talks and poster sessions on topics ranging from yeast genetics, through evolutionary biology, synthetic biology, biotechnology and fungal pathogens.

During my PhD I have presented only at conferences focusing on RNA biology. As I continued working on my projects, I developed interest in the relationship between different aspects of posttranscriptional regulation are related to yeast evolution and adaptation to changing environmental conditions, and I hoped that presenting my work at a conference focusing on yeast would allow me to gain input on my work from experts in yeast biology. I presented my research in the form of a poster. My work has attracted a lot of attention from both my peers and established researchers, including those working on RNA biology and those less familiar with it. On one hand, it allowed me to connect with other researchers working on related molecular biology questions, to discuss how our projects complement each other, and how they might help us better explain some of our experimental results. I also got valuable feedback from scientists who work in other areas of yeast biology, which allowed me to come up with additional experiments for my PhD project. On the other hand, during this conference I had to tailor my presentation towards a broader audience of experts on yeast biology in general, who might have less experience with RNA biology. This allowed me to gain better understanding of how to present my work and what kind of background information to include depending on the target audience.

The diversity of topics covered during the conference talks allowed me to broaden my horizons and learn more about research areas I usually do not interact with. This gave me new ideas on how my PhD research fits into a broader picture and what kind of research I want to pursue in the future. The talk by Prof. Naama Barkai on the role of intrinsically disordered regions in transcription factors binding DNA gave me a new perspective on the interactions between proteins and nucleic acids, and it prompted me to learn more about

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how similar regions function in RNA-binding proteins. The conference also included several sessions related to fungal pathogens, and talking to the speakers allowed me to explore how my findings based on experiments in baker's yeast might be used to better understand fungal pathogens such as *Cryptococcus* and *Candida* yeasts. This gave me confidence that my research can have real world applications.

I am grateful to James Rennie Bequest for contributing towards the cost of this conference. Participating in ICYGMB31 allowed me to engage with areas of yeast biology that I was less familiar with, to talk to experts in the field, and to come up with new directions for my future research.