

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/Conference Title: ASCB (American Society for cell biology) 42nd annual meeting

Travel Dates: 14th-18th December 2002

Location: San Francisco, USA

Group Member: Nadia Korfali (Prof. William C. Earnshaw laboratory)

Aims:

- To participate, learn and discuss about recent and past scientific topics
- Present a poster

OUTCOME:

The 42nd American Society for cell biology (ASCB) annual meeting was held in San Francisco this year. I was really fortunate to be part of it. This meeting is one of the largest in the field of Cell Biology where scientist from all over the world came to share their scientific knowledge. The number of participant exceeded 10,000 and more than 3.100 posters were presented.

The 'kick-off' plenary sessions started with Dr S.M. Block and focused on the "Growing threat of Biological Weapons" and finished with Dr. A.W. Murray describing the advances made in genome-wide studies by sequencing the genomes of model organisms, exploration of the genome using, DNA microarray technique and many others. It was a good start but I was more interested in more specific scientific topics.

The meeting, thereafter, every morning had two symposiums where three invited speakers presented their most recent findings, and in the afternoon five minisymposiums (chosen by the committee from poster abstracts) took place. It would be impossible to summarise the scientific knowledge I gained from the four days. Therefore, I will focus on two minisymposiums that were of great interest to me since they were related to what I am, and would like to continue, working on, cell death or apoptosis.

The first one was titled "Extracellular matrix and apoptosis" and the second "Apoptosis and cellular senescence". As a whole the two sessions summarised the research conducted in order to try and understand how or which signals from the cell surroundings have a role in cell behaviour and when

or why this interaction fails leading to cell transformation and cancer. The two talks that I liked the most were given by Dr. M.J. Regatino and Dr K.R. Mills who both work in Dr. J. Brugges's laboratory. Dr. Regatino 's work, presented in the first minisymposium, focused on the role of one of the apoptotic factor "Bim" on regulating epithelial lumen formation. Dr Mill's topic, placed in the apoptotic subgroup, analysed in more details the role, function and interaction of Bim and other apoptotic players in the signalling pathways involved in cavitation of mammary epithelial acini.

Although, I mentioned plenary sessions and minisymposia already my favourite part of the conference was the poster sessions. Posters were on display every day for four days in a row. I found it very enjoyable to read, discuss and learn about the various topics. I, myself, presented a poster (included at the end of this report). I was amazed by the number of people that showed up and the advice I was given. It certainly gave me some directions and ideas about my own work.

I personally believe that the event was extraordinarily successful and of great benefit to my scientific career.