

# JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

## REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/Conference Title:** XVth Ovarian Workshop and 37<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting for the Society for the Study of Reproduction

**Travel Dates:** July 29<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> August 2004

**Location:** Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

**Group Member(s):** Kirsty Walters and Dr Evelyn Telfer

**Aims:** To attend an international conference where I could present my work to leading scientists in the field and receive valuable feedback and discussion on my findings. Furthermore, to attend talks and meet well-recognised scientists as a way of broadening my knowledge, and pursuing a career in this field.

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

I attended and presented at two conferences the first being the XVth Ovarian Workshop, The Ovary: Signalling Mechanisms Regulating Development and Dysfunction and the second being the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting for the Society for the Study of Reproduction.

During the first conference I presented a poster entitled 'Regulation of Early Bovine Follicle Development by IGF-I is Stage Dependent'. I enjoyed presenting my work especially since this was a small meeting and therefore had the opportunity to meet most of the scientists who attended the conference and gained valuable feedback on my findings.

The key session I attended at this conference was entitled 'Ovarian stem cells'. Dr Richard Schultz (Philadelphia, USA) and Dr Jonathan Tilly (Boston, USA) both gave fascinating talks on the exciting advancements in the technique of RNA interference as a tool to study gene function in oocyte development and the intriguing new evidence that follicular renewal may occur in the postnatal mammalian ovary respectively.

At the second conference a poster gallery was held where I presented my work entitled 'The Effects of IGF-I on Follicle Development and IGFBP-2 Expression in Bovine Antral Follicles *In Vitro*'. This conference was much larger than the first and hence I received constructive feedback from scientists who specialise particularly on the IGF System.

I attended many interesting talks during the SSR conference. Dr Evelyn Telfer (Edinburgh, UK) gave a fascinating talk on how leukaemia-inhibitory factor (LIF) appears to be a factor which can promote follicle survival during the long-term culture of human ovarian cortex. It was found that the presence of LIF improved not only oocyte but also granulosa cell health. While Dr Fiona Thomas described how follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) regulates oocyte growth by modulating the expression of the oocyte and granulosa cell factors, Kit Ligand (KL), GDF-9 and BMP-15. Both talks provided encouraging results by using *in vitro* culture systems which are of great importance

as they not only provide an environment for *in vitro* growth of ovarian follicles but also are an invaluable tool for further research into processes governing follicular development.