

## IUIS-GEC Fellowship recipients from Romania report back from the Ceppellini School of Immunology



Dear Committee on Gender Equality and Career Development of the IUIS,

Thank you so much for the generous full fellowship that gave me the great opportunity to participate at the Ceppellini School of Immunology.

My interest in Immunology began in the second year of study at the Faculty of Medicine, when I joined the immunology research team at Victor Babes Institute. One year later, I became a member of the Romanian Society of Immunology, which gave me their entire support as a young researcher and allowed me to keep up to date with the complex field of modern immunology through workshops, national meetings and conferences. In our laboratory we focus on tumor immunology and immunotherapy field. After graduation, I presented my license thesis based on our research regarding two valuable serum biomarkers (S100B and MIA) for prognosis of the very aggressive skin melanoma, for early diagnosis of melanoma metastasis and for

monitoring the disease during antineoplastic treatment. We are currently investigating these two biomarkers in relation to age and immune status in pregnant women, neonates, infants and children, that's why I was very enthusiastic when I first heard about "The Maternal Immune System in Pregnancy" advanced course.

I really enjoyed the lectures about the complex immune tolerance in pregnancy and I am fascinated with the mechanisms by which maternal immune system finds the correct balance to escape the rejection of the harmless non-self fetus. I've learned during this course that the fetal immune system, once believed to be immature and non-functional, may also have an important role in this "paradox of pregnancy".

The discussions on immune tolerance of the dangerous non-self cells in cancer which were exemplified with different studies on melanoma brought new insights on the subject, which will help me in my future career as a young researcher. A better understanding of similarities and differences between materno-fetal and tumor tolerance mechanisms could provide new strategies for cancer treatment. I was happy to learn about recent advances on immunotherapy in melanoma and I really appreciated the novelty of the courses.

The Ceppellini School experience was not only about the scientific lectures, it was also about gathering people from all over the world, to share knowledge from different perspectives on general points of interest in the immunology field. I am very happy that I had the chance to meet special people with similar interests, eager to establish new connections for possible future collaborations.

The course exceeded my expectations with the quality of the presentations, the openness and amiability of all the lecturers and the pleasant way it was all organized.

Thank you for your support,

Sincerely,

Georgiana Roxana Dumitrascu, M.D.

Dear Madame Olivier Finn,

I would like to thank to the Gender Equality and Career Development (GECD) Committee of International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS): I am extremely grateful for giving me the opportunity and financial support to attend “The Maternal Immune System in Pregnancy”, which was held in Castellammare di Stabia (Naples), 7 – 9 December 2014.

For me it was the second participation in “Scuola Superiore di Immunologia Ruggero Ceppellini” courses and it was a great pleasure to come back in Naples.

I listened with pleasure to all the presentations of the teachers and I was deeply delighted to find interesting things for my work, such as fetal immune system, T cell responses during pregnancy, pregnancy disorders, transplantation tolerance or leukocyte trafficking. All the faculty members were highly trained, presenting works extremely well documented and being very willing to answer our questions (even during meals!).

I would also like to thank to Mrs. Roberta Saioni for her priceless help regarding the organisation and the travelling.

I wish you all the best in your future courses,

Adriana Munteanu



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