

A SHORT REPORT ON THE CONCLUDED INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN IMMUNOLOGY (12-17TH JULY 2014; LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA)

I was fortunate to be selected as one of the travel awardees from a developing country to attend the introductory course in Immunology. The course was co-sponsored by the American Association of Immunologists (AAI) and the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS) through its Education and Gender Equality Career Development Committees.

The course was an exciting and eye opening experience for me in terms of understanding the basics of immunology such as the complement system, how antigens are processed and presented, and cell responses among other important lessons.

The second part of the training covered clinical applications such as tumor immunology, transplants, immunity to viruses and current issues in immunology, just to mention but a few.

Both parts of the training made me appreciate the importance/robustness of Immunology when it comes to development of new drugs and vaccines for diseases such as auto-immune diseases which are on the rise both in developing and developed countries.

The training enabled me to freely interact with renowned immunologists who until then, the only interaction I had with them was in print media, but who turned out to be excellent tutors and passed on the material in a very clear and easy to understand manner.

I was also delighted to interact with other scientist from around the world ranging from graduates, post doctoral fellows, diagnostic fellows among others who had a vast array of knowledge in science.

The environment in which the course took place was quite relaxing and hospitable and the perfect weather summed it all up.

Am happy to report that this course will go a long way in benefitting my institute as well, in that I will be able to apply my acquired immunology knowledge in my day to day work in finding solutions for infectious diseases present in resource limited settings.

In conclusion I would like to point out that this training opportunity accorded me my first USA experience which wasn't disappointing in any way and I hope this will be the beginning of many more to come.

A word of appreciation goes to AAI, through the Executive Director Dr. Michele Hogan, Course Director Dr Juan Carlos Zuñiga-Pflücker, Manager of Educational and Career Development Programs Officer Dr. Mary T. Litzinger and the meetings coordinator Samantha Moore for the training and housing sponsorship, for bringing together world renowned immunologist to share their knowledge and for the excellent coordination of activities.

I would also like to thank the IUIS Education committee chaired by Dr. Michelle Letarte, Gender Equality and Career Development Committee chaired by Dr Olivera Finn for the travel support which enabled me to travel from my home country and back for this great opportunity. This showed their steadfast commitment in empowering young female scientists from developing countries achieve their career goals.

Last but not least, The Director KEMRI for granting me permission to attend this worthy training overseas.

Sincere thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Elizabeth A. Ochola', written in a cursive style.

Elizabeth A. Ochola (Msc.)
Assistant Research Officer
Neglected Tropical Diseases Unit
Center for Global health Research
Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI)
Kisumu, Kenya