

THE EFIS-EJI RUGGERO CEPPELLINI ADVANCED SCHOOL OF IMMUNOLOGY

THE MATERNAL IMMUNE SYSTEM IN PREGNANCY, 7-9 December 2014

Restoring Ancient Stabiae, Vesuvian Institute, Castellammare di Stabia (Naples), Italy.

Directors: Francesco Colucci and Ashley Moffet, University of Cambridge, UK.

This Course brought together experts in reproductive immunology with those in areas at the intersection of immunology with cancer, transplantation and infection, with the aim to understand the biological factors underlying pregnancy complications, and to design new strategies to prevent fetal mortality. The faculty included Drs John Trowsdale, Ashley Moffet, Annette Nakimuli, Allison Elliott, Elizabeth Simpson, Tamara Tilburgs, Jakob Michaelsson, Maria Luisa Alegre, Anthony De Tomaso, Angela Santi, Ennio Carbone, Thomas Gajewski, and Francesco Colucci.

Some of the conclusions reached were that certain combinations of maternal NK cell receptors (NKR) and fetal MHC genotypes are risk factors for common disorders of pregnancy and that understanding how NKR-MHC combinations translate into different NK functions that affect trophoblast invasion is the next challenge. New *in vivo* and *in vitro* models are needed to understand the immunogenetics of pregnancy, and how the activation of maternal NK cells by MHC class I molecules enhances placentation, while their suppression impedes uterine vascular remodelling and fetal growth.

The international audience participated in intense and constructive ways, with many questions asked in the conference room and in small discussion groups gathering after the lectures. The support provided by EFIS-EJI assured a European base of participants, and was enhanced by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the participation of highly motivated young scientists and MDs from developing countries. The merging of countries and cultures, and of overlapping scientific disciplines, constituted a great asset in the success of this event. The spectacular view of majestic, sleeping Vesuvius completed the collective satisfaction.

A full report of this meeting by Dr Antonio Di Giacomo, has appeared in the European Journal of Immunology.

The IUIS Gender Equality and Career Development committee gave a travel award to **Dr Georgiana Roxana Dumitrascu, from Serbia** whose report is on their website. The IUIS Education committee gave travel awards to the following two students.



Iva Filipović, from Serbia, PhD student, Hammersmith Hospital, London

I am writing to you and the IUS Education Committee to express my sincere gratitude for awarding me a full fellowship for the EFIS-EJI Advanced Course “The Maternal Immune System in Pregnancy” organised by the Ceppellini School of Immunology. I was thrilled to find out that I was selected as the recipient of the fellowship and I am deeply appreciative of your support.

During my undergraduate studies in Molecular Biology and Physiology at the University of Belgrade in Serbia, I developed an interest in the immunology of pregnancy. This led me to apply for a M.Sc. course in Immunology at Imperial College London, where I am currently studying, having been awarded the Dean’s Master’s Scholarship by the Faculty of Medicine.

The Course has been an invaluable experience for me. Meeting and listening to experts in reproductive immunology, but also those in cancer, transplantation and infection immunology, offered wonderful insights into the biological factors and mechanisms underlying pregnancy and possible complications.

It also highlighted that although we now know much more than we did 20 years ago, there is still a tremendous amount of work to be done. It offers a big niche for young scientists, but at the same time represents a big responsibility as the incidence of pregnancy complications is on the rise, demanding a better understanding of the underlying biology in order to prevent them.

In addition, the Course provided me with the opportunity to speak to Dr Francesco Colucci, one of the Course Directors whose work I've been admiring. I have just been awarded a prestigious Centre for Trophoblast Research PhD studentship at the University of Cambridge to join Dr Colucci's group, which will enable me to further study biology and interactions of cells at the maternal-fetal interface. Thanks to your generous fellowship, I came one step closer to my goal of pursuing doctoral studies; through learning more from the experts in the field which has given me a firm foundation to build upon during my PhD project.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank both the Ceppellini School and Effe Erre Congressi, Naples, for their perfect organisation of the event; both scientific and social programmes were of the highest level. Learning about immunology was perfectly complemented with a mix of music, culture (Roman ruins) and delicious food that I can't forget.

Thank you once again for your generosity and support. My goal is to stay in research after finishing my PhD studies and hopefully one day I will be able to contribute to the IUIS and give back what I have received and what enormously helped me focus on my research by lightening the financial burden of attending such a valuable Course.



Marilen Benner, MSc student, Radboud University Medical Center, Department of Laboratory Medicine, Nijmegen The Netherlands.

In the beginning of December 2014, I attended the Ceppellini School in Castellammare di Stabia on reproductive immunology. When I first heard about it, the Ceppellini School looked very interesting to me as it fitted my interests very well and coincided with the field I wanted to specialize in. However, as a masters student my travelling budget is limited. A fellowship of the IUIS made it possible for me to attend the programme.

The three days in Castellammare were highly informative. An exceptional meeting with all topics closely related to each other. The strong connection between the subjects gave a lot of opportunities to learn from each other and to interact. The presentations gave a good overview of current developments in the field. Aside from knowledge transfer I experienced how passionate the scientists are about the topic, motivating me to dive deeper into the field. I met a lot of interesting people, and I am very happy that I had the opportunity to make these experiences.



Ceppellini Advanced Course, group photo 2014.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP AND 9TH FAIS CONFERENCE “TOWARDS THE INTEGRATION OF IMMUNOLOGY INTO AFRICA’S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM”, NAIROBI, NOVEMBER 28-DECEMBER 4, 2014

The workshop organized by Drs Thomas Kariuki, president of FAIS and Lucy Ochola, was held at the Institute of Primate Research in Karen. It regrouped 35 students from several African countries. Over 3 days, lectures on various topics were given with discussions, and viewing of student posters during lunch breaks. Teachers and their topics included Drs Gerald Chege (Innate Immunity; Immune Responses in SIV infections; role of laboratory animals in human vaccine development), Michelle Letarte (MHC and regulation of immune response), Reinhold Schmidt (Macrophages and NK cells in defence; inflammation & allergy), Dr Rebecca Waihenya (Adaptive Immunity), Eleanor Fish (Cytokine Signaling in T and B cells and during inflammation; Modern Biological and Immune Therapies 9), Pa Tamba Ngom (T cells and environmental factors in immunity), Clive Gray (Central and Peripheral Tolerance; Immune Response in HIV and AIDS; Modern Clinical Vaccines; Ebola, the way forward), Michael Gicheru (Chemokines); Tindish Heshborne (Immune Response to Parasites); Dorcas Yole (Immunity to Bacterial Infections); Thomas Kariuki (Preclinical Evaluation of Vaccines for tropical diseases); Elefantus Njagi (mechanisms of vaccination); BD team (Principles of Flow Cytometry and practical sessions).

Students also presented their posters or gave oral talks at the conference. I chaired the poster session and recruited 10 judges of International stature to evaluate the student’s work. This was a very efficient process and the top 5 students were awarded IUIS Education Committee money prizes, which were well appreciated and possibly a first for most African students. Winners of oral talks received FAIS prizes.

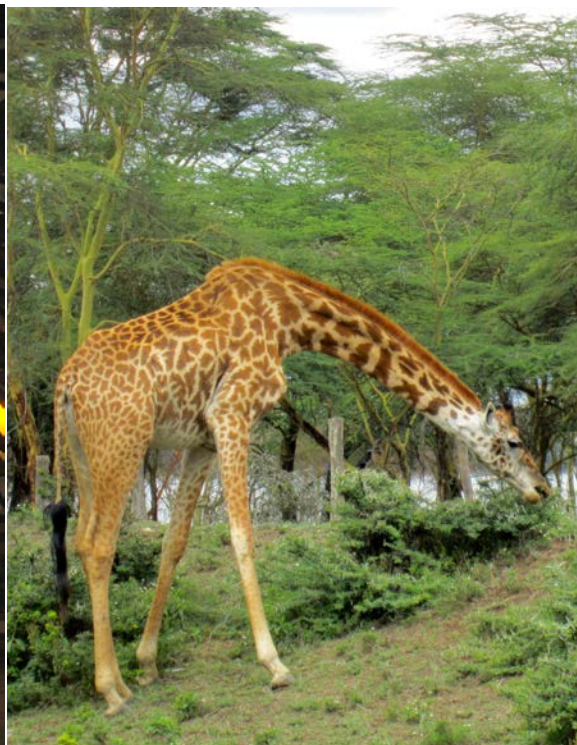
The IUIS held its annual meetings (executive and Council) In Nairobi as well as meetings with several of its committees. Their overall goal is to revitalize the Union and give it expanded funding and international visibility within a more organized structure.

Members of the Education and Clinical Immunology Committees held several meetings during the Nairobi Conference with FAIS members, with the aim of setting up Immunology Workshops to be held in each of the four corners of Africa every 2 years. In addition, preparatory course modules would be made available on line, through access restricted portals on the existing Immunopaedia website from the University of Cape Town. It was also agreed by Latin America members present at the FAIS meeting that regional workshops would also be initiated on their continent. The first two workshops with on line portals are being held in October 2015, the first one in Medellin Columbia and the second one in Cape Town, South Africa. Additional workshops are planned for North, West and East Africa for 2016.

The FAIS conference was excellent in terms of scientific content and organization. Most special was the interaction between participants and their evident determination to move forward towards excellence and become proactive in terms of African Immunology Education and Research. The IUIS Education and Clinical Immunology committees are determined to run successful and accountable workshops and to obtain more funding from outside agencies to meet the increasing demand for excellent courses in developing countries.



Members of IUIS and FAIS in Nairobi



Lobby of Safari Park Hotel



Evening performance at the FAIS meeting

4th NIF Winter School on Advanced Immunology



18-23 January 2015, Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, Singapore



For NIF 2015 Winter School, we received 180 applications from 41 countries. Organizing committee led by Laurent Rénia carefully shortlisted all applications and 50 applications were selected based on scientific excellence. Two applicants withdrew at last minute due to personal reasons, so final number of students was 48. Participants of 25 nationalities came from institutes & universities in 17 countries of 5 continents. 39 of them were advanced PhD students; 11 were early postdocs. Most of the participants were 24-34 years old. 70% of the participants were female.

This was the fourth year of the NIF Winter School – a partnership between the IFReC Institute in Japan and SigN in Singapore – and the second time that was held in Singapore. The scientific program comprised of 16 guest lectures, participants' short presentations and poster sessions. Each participant presented a poster during one of the poster sessions and gave a short oral presentation as well. The short talks and lectures were grouped according to the topic.



The course was able to attract a prominent international faculty from the US (2), Europe (4), Japan (4), Australia (3) and Singapore (3): Shizuo Akira, Facundo Batista, Burkhard Becher, Yasmine Belkaid, Frank Carbone, James Di Santo, Nicholas Gascoigne, Tomohiro Kurosaki, Ana-Maria Lennon Duménil, Kenneth Murphy, Shalin Naik, Evan Newell, Laurent Rénia, Shimon Sakaguchi, Mark Smyth and Kiyoshi Takeda.

The enthusiasm of the participants and the high scientific quality of the lectures and students' presentations made the 2015 NIF Winter School an extremely successful event. Throughout the week, lecturers and students shared intriguing insights and findings in immunology, discussed new ideas and forged friendships that fuelled networking and future collaborations.

Presentation Award laureates

Francisca FERREIRA DE ALMEIDA (Singapore Immunology Network): "Identification of Potential T cell Progenitors in the Adult Epidermis"

Yonit LAVIN (Mount Sinai): "Tissue Macrophage Enhancer Landscapes are Shaped by Ontogeny and the Local Microenvironment"

Yochai WOLF (Weizmann Institute of Science): "Studying Microglia in Context"



Quotes from the participants

"It was a very inspiring cohort of researchers, I learnt a lot about the science that is conducted across the world."

"Fantastic and relaxing setting for students to interact with invited speakers and participants around the globe."

"The lectures are all leading scientists in their fields. They brought the latest advances to us."

"Great time and structure."

"People discuss a lot, it's excellent!"

"Had a great time meeting and discussing science with faculty and students."

"Organizers were very helpful and accommodating."

"It was a pleasure to attend this 4th NIF Winter School thank you very much!"



The following two students were funded through the IUIS Education Committee:

Florencia Sabbione, PhD student, IMEX-CONICET, Argentina

I want to thank the IUIS for giving me the chance to attend the 4th NIF Winter School on Advanced Immunology. It was a great opportunity to interact with really wonderful scientists and students from all over the world. It was a good environment in which we were able to exchange enrichment ideas. The organization of the course was excellent and the program included diverse topics that improve my knowledge.

Fu-Chen Yang, PhD student, Institute of Microbiology and Immunology

School of Life Sciences, National Yang-Ming University, Taiwan (ROC)

The Advanced Immunology course from 4th Network of Immunology Frontier was an eye opener into the world of immunology. I feel very grateful to attend this course. It was a great experience and I learned a lot. All lectures gave me an extensive introduction of every topic and also shared the latest developments in different fields of immunology. Even when I was not familiar with the subject, professors were willing to answer the questions and explained various topics with experiments that gave me current information and not just book knowledge. This course proved to be a future career defining moment for me, and it did indeed improve my knowledge in the field of immunology and stimulate my current research. In addition, it was a good chance to meet people and discuss and share ideas during the whole course. Last but not least, I thank the director of IFREC and SIGN for granting me permission to attend this worthy training overseas.



**FOCIS 2015 – ADVANCED COURSE IN BASIC & CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY,
February 8-12, Hotel Valley Ho, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA.**

This year, we had 86 applicants from 22 countries for this course. Most of them were from Africa, including 17 from Kenya, 16 from South Africa, 9 each from Cameroon and Zimbabwe, 8 from Ghana, 5 from Nigeria, 4 from Uganda, 3 each from Ethiopia and Algeria, 2 each from Sudan, Tunisia and Gambia, one each from Mozambique, Namibia, Mauritius and Egypt. Other students were from Peru (2), Iran (2), Ukraine (1), China (1), Bangladesh (1) and Malaysia (1). In view of the large number of applicants, IUIS and FOCIS agreed this year to co-sponsor 4 students. IUIS paid for the travel award and FOCIS for registration, accommodation and meals during the course.

One student ***Ms Tufária Nazimo Ibrahimo Mussá, from the Department Microbiology, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, Mozambique,*** was funded by the Gender, Equality and Career Development Committee and her report appears on their website.

The other 3 students received awards from the IUIS Education Committee. Their reports follow:



Ms Manel Amri, PhD student, Laboratory of Cellular and Molecular Biology, Faculty of Biological Science, University of Sciences and Technology Houari Boumediene (USTHB), Algiers, Algeria.

The FOCIS course held in Scottsdale, Arizona was one of the best-organized courses I have ever attended. It was my honor to be invited to participate in this course. I am very grateful for the award provided by FOCIS and IUIS. It was a privilege to listen to so many excellent speakers. I appreciated the presentation of new ideas and concepts that expanded my mind. Moreover, I had the opportunity to network with scientists from around the world in a less formal way. I appreciated the relaxed and warm atmosphere of this course. I have many memories, which I share all around. I would like to conclude by thanking all those who give their time to organize this course especially Dr Michelle Letarte. I loved the course and thoroughly enjoyed my time in Scottsdale. Looking forward to seeing you all again.

Dr Suraj P. Parihar, International Centre for Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology (ICGEB), University of Cape Town, Medical School Campus, Cape Town, South Africa.

I would like to thank FOCIS and IUIS for giving me the opportunity to attend this course which I was eager to attend for quite a long time, specifically my first application was in 2010 for which I was unsuccessful. The course was very informative and was extremely useful with regard to current research in immunology. It also provided an in-depth understanding of basic and advanced immunology and the fundamental differences between murine and human immunology. In addition, it provided a rare opportunity to engage with the most renowned immunologists across USA. The nature of the course allowed enough time to interact with faculty and fellow researchers and ask important questions relating to their individual expertise.

The course has also been productive for me as I was able to foster new relations with researchers from USA and other countries and with staff from well-known pharmaceutical companies. The knowledge that I have acquired at the course has sharpened my understanding of immunology and has introduced me to new and exciting techniques currently being used in the field. In addition, this will enable me to better supervise current students.

I sincerely thank IUIS and FOCIS for the award which made possible to attend the course and I will highly recommend students to attend this course in future given the knowledge one can get from the course.

Dr Ivan Best, Post-doctoral Fellow, Farmacológicos Veterinarios (FARVET), Ica, Peru.

I would like to thank the IUIS/FOCIS for giving me the opportunity to participate in the Advanced Course in Basic & Clinical Immunology 2015.

My research focuses on the mechanisms that control the development of infectious diseases in humans and animals. I am particularly interested in understanding the potential immunological and environmental risk factors that contribute to the development of diseases in exposed populations. To date, I have been working in four different research areas: the impact of micronutrient deficiencies on the immune system, the search of immunological and viral markers associated with expression of infectious diseases, the development and evaluation of veterinary recombinant vaccines and the evaluation of an oncolytic virotherapy using recombinant Newcastle disease viruses (NDV).

During my MSc thesis, I was involved in the assessment of vitamin A deficiency on the immune response in an experimental model of BALB/c mice infected with a pathogenic strain of *L. mexicana* M379. The objective of my PhD thesis was to identify immunological and/or viral markers independently associated with HTLV-1-associated myelopathy/tropical spastic paraparesis (HAM/TSP) in a Peruvian population; a disease caused by infection with the Human T-Cell Lymphotropic Virus-1 (HTLV-1).

My current work focuses primarily on the research and development of next generation vaccines against the most prevalent diseases in the poultry industry such as Newcastle, Gumboro, Viral Inclusion Body Hepatitis (IBH), Laryngotracheitis and Infectious Bronchitis (IB). Furthermore, using the reverse genetics technology, we are developing recombinant Newcastle disease viruses (NDV) expressing pro-apoptotic proteins that stimulate the elimination of tumor cells. Participating in this course gave me the opportunity to update my knowledge of basic and applied immunology, which added to the quality of the lectures and professors, allowed all participants to share the latest advances in immunology in a pleasant environment where we could interact with professors who always were open to scientific discussion all times.

I appreciate the initiative of the IUIS/FOCIS to promote the participation of researchers from around the world in these courses, allowing us to experience different realities and establish scientific contacts to promote the development of immunology.



11TH SPRING SCHOOL ON IMMUNOLOGY, March 8-13, 2015, Ettal, Bavaria, Germany

Organizers: German Society for Immunology (DGfI)

In the intimate setting of an old cloister, 60 doctoral students and 25 lecturers come together to discuss the latest developments in Immunology. This School is part of the DGfI's Academy for Immunology and offers advanced training for primarily doctoral students in the later stages of their PhD training with already good knowledge of the field.

The School is based on plenary lectures reviewing the major themes and also offering ample time for discussions. Because of the active participation in the sessions and the intense exchange, the students have excellent opportunities for networking early on in their career.

This year, IUIS and DGfI were able to co-sponsor 3 students to attend this course. There were a record number of 80 applications received for the 3 awards. There were 68 candidates from 18 African countries: South Africa, 12; Kenya, 11; Cameroon, 9; Ghana, 6; Nigeria, 5; Sudan, Egypt and Zambia, 3 each; Algeria, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mauritius, Uganda and Zimbabwe, two each; Tunisia, Senegal, Benin and Botswana, 1 each. There were 3 students from Iran, one from Malaysia and one from India. And there was one student each from Russia, Ukraine, Croatia, Serbia, Latvia, Peru and Argentina. This year, 3 young scientists were co-sponsored by IUIS and AAI, IUIS providing the travel awards and AAI, the accommodation and course registration.

Marko Šestan, PhD student, Department of Histology and Embryology, School of Medicine, University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia

During the Spring School of Immunology, I had the opportunity to learn a lot of new things in immunology. As I am working with NK cells, for me the most beneficial were the lectures about innate immune responses in different diseases. Especially the part about the differences between NK cells and ILC cells was very interesting, as they are very similar and they express the same markers, which makes it very difficult to distinguish them.

Also, I learned a lot during the practical course, because for the first time I had the opportunity to work with multicolor staining in flow cytometry. This opens a great new possibility in my everyday work.

From the speakers, for me the most impressive was the talk of Mark Davis, who states that it would be better to do all new research in humans than in animal models, because there are differences in the immune response between humans and animals, which make it very hard to translate new findings from mouse models to humans.

I met a lot of new, very interesting people and made friendship for, I hope, a lifetime. In addition, during the course, I could make connection with some group leaders, which may open opportunities for doing postdoctoral training. All in all, I liked this course a lot, and I want to thank you for the scholarship.

Dr Feki Sawsan, MD, PhD student, Laboratory of Immunology, Habib Bourguiba University Hospital, Sfax, Tunisia

A definitely great experience!! I feel very grateful for having been selected as one of the DGfI/IUIS grant awardees from developing countries to attend the 11th Spring School on Immunology in Ettal, Bavaria.

The Program of the School was very interesting and covered various fields of immunology; it was a good opportunity for me to update my knowledge, to network with colleagues, and to discuss my work with experts from other countries. What I liked best was the Q and A sessions, which were a successful interactive part of this course. The practicals were also well adjusted to our expertise and interest. In addition, the setting of the meeting was wonderful, and the event was well organized.

As an assistant in Clinical Immunology and a researcher, this course will certainly have a deep impact on my routine laboratory work, my educational career at the university and my scientific research.

Many thanks to the German society of immunology and to the IUIS education committee (chaired by Dr Michelle Letarte) for their helpful attitude!

, Kirill Korneev, PhD student, Engelhardt Institute of Molecular Biology, Russian Academy of Sciences and Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

I am very grateful to the Education Committee of the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS) and the German Society of Immunology (DGfI) for awarding me a scholarship to attend the 11th Spring School of Immunology in Ettal, Germany. It was my first experience of participation in the scientific school outside Russia and without providing financial support it would be hard to implement. I am also very thankful to the talented team of organizers of the Spring School. Lectures, questions and answers, poster sessions, leisure activities, accommodation and transfer of participants - everything was fantastically organized.

We had a unique opportunity to attend lectures of outstanding scientists - leading specialists in immunology and molecular biology. These lectures comprised a wide range of modern immunology but in my opinion it would be nice in future to expand topics of innate immunity and tumor immunology. "Questions and Answers" were the most prominent and exciting part of the School. Participants had unique opportunity to talk with lecturers in small groups and ask questions about the lecture as well as about their career in science. I would also like to note the Practical. Despite the fact that it is impossible to create a wet lab at the School, this part was organized well and included both theoretical backgrounds and flow cytometry data processing by a computer. Poster sessions provided an opportunity to assess the "hot topics" of immunology as well as to make a qualitative comparison of my study with similar works by other participants. I suppose it would be good to extend the time available for the poster sessions as there often occurred scientific discussions for quite a long time. Another important factor was the amazing location of the School - it is really impossible to forget spring alpine landscapes. Scenic views of the surrounding area from the windows of our wonderful hotel were fascinating. I was pleasantly surprised by the opportunity to expand my gastronomic interests and taste traditional food of the south of Germany. The cultural program was also interesting: we visited Ettal Abbey and Schlossmuseum in Murnau.

I came back to Russia fully satisfied because the Spring School of Immunology not only refreshed my knowledge of modern immunology but also allowed to have a productive discussion of my research project as well as to establish scientific networks with the participants of the School, which is certainly important for my current research activities and future career in immunology. That is why I highly recommend this fantastic School to all PhD students in the area of immunology."

Marko Šestan , Dr Feki Sawsan, Kirill Korneev



6TH FIMSA CONGRESS, SINGAPORE (June 30-July 3, 2015)

Hosted by the Singaporean Society of Immunology, with the major theme “Frontiers in Immune Modulation” and with high profile regional and international speakers. This Congress provides educational and networking opportunities for early career researchers attending the conference. More than 600 people attended. Twenty travel awards of \$1000 each were given to young researchers from developing countries of Asia and South East Asia by FIMSA, the Singaporean Society of Immunology and the IUIS Education Committee.

The 5 IUIS early career awardees provided the following reports:



Ching-Yu Huang, National Health Research Institutes, Taiwan. Attending the FIMSA 2015 congress in Singapore has been quite a rewarding experience. The scientific program, space arrangement and schedule administration were all well-organized and well-executed, not to mention the first-class facility and staff at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre. Wonderful presentations were offered by the keynote and invited speakers, from which I was able to develop several interesting ideas about my on-going research. The meeting also allocated sufficient time and space for networking, allowing me to exchange scientific and societal thoughts with several local immunologists. Nevertheless, one thing that may be improved is the scope of the selected topics: it seems to me that a significant focus has been placed on translational researches for infectious disease and cancer. Just coming back from a Cancer, Inflammation, and Immunity conference, I can certainly appreciate the importance of therapy and vaccine development. In addition, it may be difficult to cover too many topics for a medium-scale conference of ~600 attendees like FIMSA. However, I still feel that basic immunology studies might have been slightly underrepresented in the FIMSA 2015 congress. This small point aside, I am glad that I attended this meeting and enjoyed the hospitality of our local hosts from the Singapore Society of Immunology. Lastly I also wish to thank the meeting organizers for awarding me an IUIS travel fellowship. I will definitely be looking forward to the coming FIMSA 2018 in Bangkok.



Man Li, Shanghai Institute of Immunology, Department of Immunology and Microbiology, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, Shanghai, China.

It was really my great honor to attend the FIMSA Congress in Singapore. It is my first time to attend an international immunology conference, and I had the opportunity to learn from the outstanding professors from all over the world! At the same time, I could exchange ideas and share experiences during the poster session with students from other labs. Thank you for rewarding me with the IUIS travel grant.



Sakshi Mali, PhD Student, Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), NCR Biotech Science Cluster, Faridabad-121001, India

I extend my warm regards to FIMSA and The Singaporean Society for Immunology for providing opportunity to early career doctoral students like me to attend this conference. The IUIS travel award provided me with a platform to hear good immunological research but also to connect and network with leaders of fields as well as other attendees. Not only could I discuss my research problems with them but I could also learn from their scientific and technical expertise. In addition to hearing great research at FIMSA, the pre-conference workshop helped me to learn recent advancements in the field of cell sorting and cellular analysis using FACS technology. FIMSA-2015 provided a wonderful networking event, which is going to help me lot for my future scientific endeavor. The wide range of scientific talks covered the whole spectrum of Immunology research especially that of infectious diseases. Moreover, intensive scientific talks impacted me to decide which challenge of immunology research I would like to address in near future. Other than scientific talks, I also enjoyed and learn a lot from the poster session organized at FIMSA. The mix of poster sessions and oral presentations made the overall scientific event at FIMSA very interactive. Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the organizing committee of FIMSA 2015 for their great effort to make this conference a global scientific event. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to FIMSA 2015 for providing me with an IUIS travel award, which impacted me in my early scientific career in innumerable ways, which will be reflected in years to come.



Meng Xia, National Key Laboratory of Medical Molecular Biology & Department of Immunology, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Beijing, China.

I was very fortunate to get this IUIS travel award and attend the grand 6th congress of FIMSA held from 30 June to 3 July 2015 in Singapore. I was very impressed by the keynote address given by professor Tasuku Honjo, which summarized the role of PD-1 in cancer therapy. I was also very interested in the Immune Regulation and Inflammation part. A lot of the reports in this part gave me inspiration for my ongoing research and expanded my view. I loved the poster session too. I was very pleased to discuss with others face to face. It helped me gain the information directly and accurately. The only thing that might need to be improved in this congress was the too low temperature in the conference hall. Besides that, everything was perfect and I much enjoyed the whole meeting. Thanks to the organizers for holding this gorgeous congress and giving me this honor.



Guangxun Meng, PhD, Professor, Chief, Unit of Innate Immunity, Institut Pasteur of Shanghai, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai, China.

This is the first time for me to attend a FIMSA congress and I really enjoyed the meeting and learnt a lot from this 3.5-day conference. The congress not only invited a lot of world-famous scientists to give lectures on their respective research fields, but also organized many oral presentations from young researchers. These talks provided very good opportunities for all participants to exchange ideas and stimulate collaborations. Besides these oral presentations, the poster session also brought a lot of new progress in many different directions of immunology research, which was also full of discussion, especially among the students. Thus, the conference was not only a scientific communication, but also a very good platform of education for young researchers.

Besides the scientific program, the organization of this conference was also very professional. I also learnt critical factors for organizing a successful conference: good scientific program, nice place such as Singapore, plus professional organization team.

Last but not the least, financial support from many industry partners was also very much appreciated; without it, all the fellowships would not have been possible.



Scientists Networking with FIMSA Secretary-General Gregory Tsay

AAI 2015 INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN IMMUNOLOGY, (July 14-19, 2015)

Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, California, USA.

Course director: Dr Juan Carlos Zuñiga-Pflücker, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Of 22 applications received for this course, 20 were from Africa, one from Iran and one from Ukraine. Eight African countries were represented: Kenya, Uganda, Yaounde, South Africa, Gambia, Gabon, Cameroon, Ethiopia. This year, four young scientists were co-sponsored by IUIS and AAI, IUIS providing the travel awards and AAI, the accommodation and course registration.

Georgetta Kumba Mbayo, Scientific Officer, Medical Research Council Unit-Atlantic Road, Fajara, Banjul, The Gambia

This course was organized with the aim to enhance the immunology background and complement the general science training of those new in the field of immunology. The course was attended by a large number of participants from various parts of the world and from diverse science disciplines, including laboratory research, Biotech companies, medical schools, Clinicians, college professors.

Upon arrival at the convention center on the 14th July, we had a warm welcome by Dr Mary Litzinger and her team and the course materials were handed to us. Before the start of the lectures, Mary gave welcoming remarks and introduced all participants especially those from countries outside the United States of America. This was an effective way of us getting to know our fellow participants. Lectures started immediately after Mary's speech. Dr Juan Carlos Zuñiga-Pflücker, the course director, was the first speaker, who gave an overview of the Immune System. The other speakers gave their lectures for that day and the subsequent days till the end of lectures on the 19th July.

The course was intensive and we successfully covered 26 topics in 6 days. The course materials were clear and easy to read. The PowerPoint presentations were very good and the facilitators had lots of enthusiasm in delivering their lectures. We had adequate time for rest and lunch breaks, which kept us fresh for each lecture. Most of the participants were amazing and I gained some experience during our discussions. Overall, the lectures were of good quality and we were exposed to both old and new research investigations in Immunology and the explanations gave a better understanding of the complex nature of the human immune system and how pathogens manipulate this system for their survival and propagate diseases. With all the topics covered, I am equipped with cutting-edge knowledge and skills in applying scientific concepts and carrying out modern immunological investigations. Among the topics discussed, I particularly enjoyed the talk on 'Dendritic cells, B cells activation, humoral immunity and immunity to bacterial pathogens. Most importantly, this course has enhanced my knowledge in the immunological basis of the three major infectious diseases, HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, that are endemic in most African countries like my country the Gambia. The knowledge acquired during this training will be applied to my work at the Medical Research Council Unit, The Gambia in investigating immunological mechanisms underlying these infectious diseases.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to IUIS for granting me this travel award and AAI for registration and accommodation that allowed me to participate in this highly beneficial Introductory Immunology course. I hope to follow up with your activities and that of AAI and endeavor to become a member in the near future.

Henry Kibe Karanja, KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme, Kilifi, Kenya
Infectious Disease Long distance MSc student, University of London.

I am writing to express my gratitude for offering such a lifetime opportunity to visit the United States of America and attend one of the highest ranked immunology training. It was very relevant to my current MSc study and a great milestone in my science career. It was an eye opener to many of us in

immunology and of course the opportunity to network with faculties and fellow students.

Being my first trip in the US, it was a breathtaking experience to see a different culture and see how people do their things differently!

I believe this initiative will continue to give such opportunities to students and young scientists, which will help in driving science and immunology forward in the developing countries.

Dr Tanedjeu Kemgang, PhD, Research Associate, University of Ngaoundere - Cameroon

First of all I will say thank you again for selecting me for the grant. Attending the immunology course was an amazing experience I never had in my professional life. The first day during registration, Mary gave a warm welcome and a nice introduction to other participants. I also had an occasion to discuss and interact directly with eminent scientists in the field like Drs Turley, Ernst, Zuniga-Pflücker, just to cite a few.

I have learned a lot in a very short time. The course was very intense with latest findings of immunology. For a young researcher like me, it was an ideal occasion to partner and widen my network with researchers of same interest. That is a platform invaluable for youngsters. At the end, I had a bag full of knowledge and opportunities to sharpen my future as an immunologist.

I wish to continue the second session but I do understand the financial limitation you have at IUIS. In view of the multiple benefits I have gained during the course, I hope the IUIS will select more participants from developing countries, so that they can also have the same experience, like me. I will recommend to other specialists and sympathizers of Immunology in Cameroon and Africa, to apply for the AAI-IUIS grant in future sessions. Thank you for granting me those opportunities. Now the ball is on my side, I will surely make good use of it.

Yabo Josiane Honkpehedji, MSc student in Tropical Infections Diseases, Centre de Recherches Médicales de Lambarene, Lambarene, Gabon

Supported by the IUIS Gender Equality Career Development Committee. Her report is on their website.



Henry Karanja, Yabo Josiane Honkpehedji, Mary Litzinger, Tanedjeu Kemgang, Georgetta Mbayo

AAI 2015 ADVANCED COURSE IN IMMUNOLOGY (August 2-7, 2015)

Seaport World Trade Center, Boston, MA, USA.

Course director: Dr Leslie J. Berg, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA.

This year we had 49 applicants from 17 countries for this course.

Applicants were from Kenya (9), Uganda (7), South Africa (4), Nigeria (4), Tunisia (2), Morocco (2), Ghana (2), Cameroon (1), Ethiopia (1), Sri Lanka (1), Thailand (1), Vietnam (2), India (1); Bangladesh (1), Mexico (5), Argentina (3), Columbia (3).

I UIS and AAI agreed to fund 4 young scientists, IUIS providing the travel awards and AAI, the accommodation and course registration. Unfortunately, one student was unable to attend, as she did not get her VISA on time.

Dr Florencia Celeste Mansilla, PhD, Laboratory of Veterinary Immunology, Institute of Virology, CICVyA INTA, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

I was selected by IUIS to receive a travel grant to attend the AAI Advanced Immunology course. It was a very profitable experience, in many different ways. First, all the lessons were very interesting and clear, with updated bibliography that was very useful. All the professors were well known scientists with a lot of experience in different fields, some of them worldwide recognized. In my particular case, it was really nice to finally meet Dr. Jenkins, as part of my doctoral thesis was based on one of his publications. In countries such as Argentina, it is very difficult to be in contact with this kind of science, as in many cases our resources are scarce. Also, it was my first visit to the United States, so I enjoyed the rest of the day after the course. I met some really kind people, (amongst them, Luz Stella Rodriguez from Colombia, who also received a fellowship from AAI-IUIS). We went sightseeing and eating in different places of this beautiful city. We had a really good time. I am very thankful to have been given this opportunity, which was great and let me consolidate my knowledge in immunology. This experience completely fulfilled my expectations!

Iheanyi Omezuruike Okonko, Teaching & Research Virologist/Immunologist, Medical Microbiology Unit, Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Biological Sciences, College of Natural & Applied Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The 2015 Advanced Course in Immunology was indeed a wonderful event for me. The IUIS/AAI travel award enabled me to attend the AAI Advanced Course in Immunology for the first time. I had expectations, which were met through the presentations and teachings during this program. The faculty was excellent and the program was highly interactive.

I benefited in that it provided an enabling environment through meeting with the experts that gave me clues on how to go about my projects and how to answer my research questions. It also gave me the opportunity to interact and exchange ideas with other immunologists at this course. It exposed me to studies done by the faculty and as such has given me ideas to improve capacity building and development of research and training in my institution and home country. The insights from the meeting and the course materials have further enriched the content of the lectures I will deliver to my students and to the future conduct of my research.

I gained insights into the biology of the immune system and its role in health and disease. Above all, the knowledge I acquired will strengthen the network of scientists who have experience and expertise to curb the menace of diseases in Nigeria.

Dr Luz-Stella Rodríguez Camacho, Assistant Professor, Institute of Human Genetics, Faculty of Medicine, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogota, Colombia.

Supported by the IUIS Gender Equality Career Development Committee. Report is on their website.



Florencia Mansilla, Mary Litzinger and Luz-Stella Rodriguez



Okonko left of Mary Litzinger, Michele Hogan and other participants