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SPECIAL ISSUE: POSTDOC RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

EDITORS: Monica Fernández-Sierra, Ph.D., Jacqueline Fairley, Ph.D. & Nnenna Adimora Finn, Ph.D.

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VISIT US AT: http://www.med.emory.edu/postdoc/PostdocComm
The Sixth Annual Emory Postdoctoral Research Symposium: Building Bridges in Academia

By Jennifer Reiner and Benyam Yoseph

The sixth annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2013 at the James B. Williams Medical Education Building. Planning and execution of the annual symposium is jointly coordinated between the Office of Postdoctoral Education (OPE), the Postdoctoral Fellows Executive Committee, and the Research Symposium Subcommittee. The objective of the research symposium is to provide an opportunity for postdoctoral fellows across a range of disciplines to share their research findings with the broader Emory community. The theme of the upcoming symposium will be “Intersecting Academia and the Clinical Sciences”. Dr. Larry Young, Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Center for Translational Social Neurosciences, will be serving as the keynote speaker for the symposium.

This year, the OPE received an array of abstract submissions that highlight the diverse research interests of Emory postdoctoral scientists. Among the many fields that will be represented in the upcoming symposium are microbiology, immunology, cancer biology, genetics, cell biology, biochemistry, pharmacology, and neuroscience. Postdoctoral fellows participating in the symposium will present their work during one of three scheduled oral sessions, or at the mid-day poster presentation session. The research symposium will conclude with an awards ceremony, where recipients of poster presentation awards will be announced. Outstanding faculty mentors that have been selected as new members of the “One-in-a-Hundred” Club will also be recognized at the awards ceremony. A reception for all of the research symposium participants, attendees, and faculty will immediately follow the awards ceremony.

Although submission of abstracts is restricted to current Emory postdoctoral fellows, all faculty, graduate students, and laboratory staff are encouraged to attend. Registration and check-in will begin one hour prior to the symposium, but advanced on-line registration is highly recommended. On-line registration information can be found at the following link: https://www.med.emory.edu/postdoc/

On behalf of the OPE and members of the postdoctoral association committees, we thank all of the presenters, volunteers, judges, attendees, and the School of Medicine Office of the Dean for helping to make the postdoctoral research symposium a success.

Perspectives on the 2012 Postdoctoral Research Symposium from the Poster Award Winners

By Amelia R. Hofstetter, Ph.D.

The 2013 Postdoctoral Symposium is right around the corner. In preparation for this year’s event, I was able to get in touch with three of last year’s poster award winners. They have kindly volunteered their experiences and advice for those presenting at this year’s Symposium.

Tiffany Thai, Ph.D. (Physiology, SOM)

Tell us about yourself: I am presently working on regulation of the renal epithelial sodium channel by intracellular calcium.

How did you prepare for last year’s Research Symposium? I prepared for the Symposium by giving the same poster at a national meeting. Then returned to Emory and fully researched the questions and suggestions given to me at the meeting. It was good to be able to talk about what I learned since the national meeting with those who attended my poster at the postdoc symposium—it reinforced my new knowledge.

Advice to future presenters: My advice would be not to set out on winning the award but rather to seize the opportunity to get advice about your work from those who may not be intimately associated with your particular field of research. By doing this you won’t seem defensive of your work as you will seem accepting of others’ ideas. This attitude might just get you the respect you need to win—but even if you don’t you will have had a valuable experience.

Meredith Baker, Ph.D. (Cardiology, SOM)

Tell us about yourself: I am currently working on wrapping up my postdoc time by compiling two papers, both involving

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Meredith Baker, Ph.D. (Cardiology, SOM)
Perspectives on the 2012 Postdoctoral Research Symposium from the Poster Award Winners (continued)

detection of microRNAs and their effect on signaling pathways. In the future, I will be working as an Assistant Professor at Kennesaw State University in the Department of Chemistry.

How did you prepare for last year’s research Symposium? In preparation for last year’s symposium I began working on a project that applied microRNA detection techniques to a known model system to help understand a potential mechanism. Previously, I had been working on detection devices for microRNA. By using these techniques in a model system, I believe I interested more people in my research.

Advice to future presenters: My advice for presenters this year is to be enthusiastic and knowledgeable about your research, dress professionally, and be open to new ideas and different directions for your research.

Shetty Ravi Dyavar, Ph.D. (Emory Vaccine Center, Yerkes)

Tell us about yourself: I was awarded a PhD in Biotechnology from the University of Pune, India in 2009. I am currently working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Emory Vaccine Center in the Yerkes National Primate Research Center. My scientific expertise is in Human Immunodeficiency Virus biology. My recent work is focused on the closely related Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) in a non-human primate model. I am working on identification of the gene signatures and correlates of protective immunity mediated by a DNAgmcsf/MVA vaccine in this model. I am also studying the beneficial effects of a combination therapy including anti-PD-1 antibody and Anti-Retroviral Therapy to treat SIV/AIDS through microarray, quantitative gene expression, gene profiling and Ingenuity Pathway Analysis approaches.

At last year’s Postdoctoral Symposium, I was awarded an ‘Outstanding Poster Presentation’ award for my poster entitled, “In vivo PD-1 blockade reduces hyperimmune activation and microbial translocation during chronic SIV infection in rhesus macaques”. Happily, this research was published in the Journal of Clinical Investigation. The major focus of this project was to determine the mechanisms regulated during PD-1 antibody therapy in SIV infected Rhesus macaques. It is important to know that hyperimmune activation is a strong predictor of disease progression during pathogenic immunodeficiency virus infections and is mediated in part by sustained type I interferon (IFN) signaling in response to adventitious microbial infection. The immune inhibitory receptor PD-1 regulates functional exhaustion of virus-specific CD8+ T cells during chronic infections, and in vivo PD-1 blockade has been shown to improve viral control of SIV. In this study, we showed that PD-1 blockade during chronic SIV infection markedly reduced the expression of transcripts associated with type I IFN signaling in the blood and colorectal tissue of rhesus macaques. Reduced type I IFN signaling was associated with enhanced expression of some of the junction-associated genes in colorectal tissue and a profound decrease in plasma LPS levels, suggesting a possible repair of gut-associated junctions and decreased microbial translocation into the blood. PD-1 blockade enhanced immunity to gut-resident pathogenic bacteria, control of gut-associated opportunistic infections, and survival of SIV-infected RMs. Our results suggest that PD-1 blockade is a potential novel therapeutic approach that can enhance combination antiretroviral therapy by suppressing hyperimmune activation in HIV-infected individuals.

How did you prepare for last year’s research Symposium? In my opinion, when judging the quality of the poster, it is important to note whether the layout is appropriate and visually appealing. Next, a clear summary of the project with adequate background information, a brief outline of procedures, plus convincing and conclusive results are highly important to make the presenter’s work comprehensible by other attendees. My wide knowledge about the PD-1 study and its background, along with careful analysis of achieved results and flow of information while presenting the research, contributed to my success at the 2012 Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium.

Advice to future presenters: My best advice for this year’s Postdoctoral Symposia participants is to design the poster content in such a way that the layout presents a visual treat to the audience. In addition, it is important to present clear background information, major goals of the study, and the impact of the work in the field to those who visit your poster. It can help to mention whether any publication related to the presented work is in submission or the review process. I wish good luck and success for this year’s contestants.

Visit the OPE website!
The place to find out about all the events and news relevant to postdocs, and to learn about the Postdoctoral Association Committees. Come join us! http://www.med.emory.edu/postdoc/
CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

- Need assistance writing a manuscript for a top-tier journal?
- Hoping to increase your acceptance probability by re-submitting a declined manuscript to a different journal?
- Interested in making your scientific writing clearer?

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO PARTICIPATE?

If you want to obtain feedback on your manuscript, submit your manuscript to Alaine Keebaugh at alaine@keebaugh.com by May 10, 2013. If you want to become a reviewer, contact Diane Wiener at diane.m.wiener@emory.edu.

For more info see https://www.med.emory.edu/postdoc/PostdocComm/science.htm

1ST ANNUAL SCIENCE WRITING WORKSHOP

Date: Wednesday, May 22nd

Time: noon to 4 pm

Location: Emory University School of Medicine, Room 130

This workshop seeks to provide Emory Postdoctoral Fellows with an opportunity to interact with and learn from academic researchers who have expertise in writing and reviewing manuscripts for high impact journals.

This event will be divided into two 90-minute sessions:
1) A panel-led discussion involving speakers who will talk candidly about developing and enhancing vital writing and reviewer skills for high impact journals.
2) A hands-on, confidential, manuscript review session where Postdocs will get direct feedback on their manuscripts in preparation from experienced academic writers.

Panelist Include:

Faculty Members:
- Dr. Michael Kuhar - Yerkes National Primate Research Center, School of Medicine
- Dr. Astrid Prinz - Associate Professor, Department of Biology
- Dr. Tammy McCoy - Chemistry Lecturer, Spelman College

Science Writers:
- Dr. Melinda Tanzola - Independent Medical Writer, Science Ink
- Dr. JoAnna Perry - Junior Scientific Content Manager, TRM Oncology
- Dr. Erin Goldman - Director, Editorial & Scientific Services, Articulate Science

Emory University Science Writers Committee

Workshop Organizers:
- Dr. Anca Doloc-Mihu, Chair
- Dr. Jacqueline A. Fairley, Co-Chair
- Dr. Nnenna Adimora Finn, Co-Chair
- Dr. Diane Wiener
- Dr. Sheena D. Brown
- Dr. Amelia Hofstetter
- Dr. Mónica Fernández-Sierra
We would like to thank all our Postdocs for their contribution to the newsletter. We encourage Postdocs to come forward and send in their articles, views, opinions, research work, jokes, and light-hearted entertainment for the coming issues of the newsletter. We also welcome the new Postdocs who have joined Emory University this semester.

Cheers!

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Mónica Fernández-Sierra
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Rastafa Geddes
Jamie Mells
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Luciano H Apponi
Yi-Ju "Ruru" Chen
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Sunayana B. "Nina" Banerjee
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