

EMBO-Cilia Meeting, Amsterdam Oct 4-7 2016

I recently attended the EMBO meeting on Cilia – from fundamental biology to human disease, for which I was provided with a travel grant from the French Network for Cilia (GDR-CIL). The meeting was held at the pristine Royal Tropical Institute at the heart of the city of Amsterdam.

With more than 350 participants, this meeting was highlighted with the fact that it was not just scientists and clinicians that were a part of it, but there were also patients and representatives of patients with various ciliopathies from across the world. This meant that there was a fruitful interaction between not just the scientists, but also with patients, which, for me, was crucial as I was able to understand what a ciliopathy patient is going through. It is always good to interact first hand with patients to know what their exact problems are, for us to try and understand the role of cilia and their effects in ciliopathies better. In this way, I was immensely pleased that I was able to be a part of this conference as I gained quite a bit of first hand knowledge about different ciliopathies talking to the patient and patient representatives during the meeting.

The meeting also covered numerous highly interesting talks and posters during the 3 days. It started with the keynote address by Dr. Gregory Pazour from University of Massachusetts, who shed light on intraflagellar transport and hedgehog signaling. Some of the experiments he discussed in his talk, like the use of rapamycin mutants to block IFT, among others could be key for the work we do in our lab, to understand the role of IFT in transporting certain proteins into the cilia. Also interesting was the talk that followed, by Dr. Jay Gopalakrishnan from Cologne, whose Microcephaly model organoids could be key for us to understand the role of tubulin PTMs in cilia and ciliopathies. Another talk of much interest was that of Kathryn Anderson of the Sloan Kettering Institute, who spoke about the regulation of primary cilia formation in the mouse. Since our laboratory also looks at the role of tubulin PTMs in ciliogenesis, stability and function, their finding of RSG1 and its role in axoneme elongation of primary cilia was enlightening for us.

The posters presented were of high quality and of much interest and it is difficult for me to pick only a few. What was good was that there was a good time for us to see the posters and have fruitful discussions with the students and group leaders alike. Some of the discussions were very helpful as I was able to get some vital inputs and suggestions for my work, which was of much importance as I will be now able to incorporate these suggestions to get a better understanding at the role of tubulin PTMs in ciliogenesis and ciliary function much better.

The most highlighting part of the meeting, personally, was the time available after the end of each day, for scientific discussions with people, during dinner. We were able to talk to people studying varied aspects of cilia, ciliary function and ciliopathies which not only helped us understand about this organelle much better as we are still new to the field. It also helped us in discussions that could lead to potential collaborations in future, which is vital.

In all, I was very happy to be a part of this meeting and I learnt a lot about the field of cilia and ciliopathies. I will be able to harness the knowledge I gathered during these

4 days of the meeting to take my work forward in a more constructive and systematic way.

I would like to be a part of all further meetings on cilia in future, not only to present the work that we do in the lab, but also to learn more and more about this fascinating field of biology from labs that do cutting edge science related to cilia.

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