

Paris, 27th October 2016

GDR TRAVEL GRANTS for the Cilia Meeting 4-7th October 2016, Amsterdam

The primary cilium is a sensory organelle present at the cell surface that regulates key signaling pathways during development and tissue homeostasis. Dysfunctional cilia are known to underlie a number of often chronically disabling and sometimes life-threatening genetic conditions and they are regrouped under the name of ciliopathies. Up to now, around 20 genes have been discovered as causative, but the genetic cause for the majority of individuals is still unknown.

I became interested on ciliopathies during my thesis, and I decided to continue doing research in this area during the post doc which I began this year.

In order to be informed on the latest developments in this field, I wanted to attend the Cilia Congress which brings together in four days approximately 400 researchers. I'm really grateful to the GDR travel grants because it allowed me to attend to the Cilia meeting which took place in Amsterdam this year. It was a great opportunity to present my thesis work, meet many people working in the same field, listen to a numerous interesting oral presentations and discover new techniques.

For this occasion, I presented a poster entitled "Novel NEK8 Mutations Cause Severe Syndromic Renal Cystic Dysplasia through YAP Dysregulation", my thesis work that I just published in March 2016. We presented new missense mutations in NEK8/NPHP9 in five cases with severe overlapping phenotypes. In our study we demonstrated that NEK8 human mutations cause major organ developmental defects due to altered ciliogenesis and cell differentiation/proliferation through deregulation of the Hippo pathway. I was very pleased to see that there were people interested in my work, with whom I have discussed and shared protocols.

Additionally, during the poster session I also had the opportunity to meet new people who work on subjects related to my new post-doctoral project, and maybe in the future these connections could potentially lead to future collaborations.

I also found the oral presentations very interesting. They were well organized in different modules, each one focusing on a different topic. I especially appreciated that many people shared with everybody unpublished data, new techniques and instilled enthusiasm and passion while speaking about their work.

I think that Cilia meetings are a good environment to meet people, to develop collaborative networks, to share ideas and to be inspired to continue research in this challenging field. I'm really satisfied from this experience and I would like to thank again the GDR committee for this opportunity.