**28th IABCR/Breakthrough Breast Cancer Conference**

**Stromal-epithelial interactions in breast cancer development and progression**

Palace Hotel, Manchester, UK  
15 - 18 April 2012

The IABCR Breast Cancer Conferences are considered to be a premier meeting for those with research interests in breast cancer. The conference is a biennial meeting that has taken place since 1983 at sites across five continents and aims to increase awareness and understanding of this major non-communicable disease that is diagnosed in 1.2 million women each year worldwide.

Founded in 1983, the International Association for Breast Cancer Research (IABCR) is an independent, international, non-governmental organisation that aims to improve basic and clinical breast cancer research by stimulating the interaction between basic scientists and clinicians in order to disseminate current breast cancer research findings and improve patient treatments. The IABCR organises a series of biennial conferences, and in 2012 the meeting was held on 15-18 April in Manchester, UK. The meeting was organised by the IABCR President, Dr Rob Clarke from the University of Manchester, and was hosted by the Manchester Cancer Research Centre (MCRC).

The four-day IABCR/Breakthrough Breast Cancer conference was a truly international meeting highlighting the unified global approach to breast cancer research. It focussed on the stromal-epithelial interactions in breast cancer development and progression and highlighted the potential that targeting the stromal environment will have for improving breast cancer treatment.

The conference attracted over 300 delegates, more than fifty percent of whom were from outside of the UK, including leading speakers from around the world and researchers and clinicians at different stages of their career path, from highly experienced specialists to trainees and students. There were around 30 presentations, 8 of which were delivered by selected promising young scientists, and around 100 posters.

The conference was organised into five complementary sessions: normal breast stromal-epithelial interactions; precursor lesion stromal-epithelial interactions; two sessions on stem cells and stroma in breast tumour biology; and a final session on stem cells and stroma in metastasis. It opened with a keynote lecture from Professor Zena Werb at the University of California, USA, focusing on new insights into the stromal regulation of mammary development. Professor Werb’s laboratory is recognised internationally for discoveries on the molecular and cellular basis of extracellular matrix proteolysis and its role in the normal function and pathogenesis of tissues. The lecture set the scene for the conference, highlighting the role of the stroma (the supporting cells and connective tissue of the breast) in the development of breast tissue and the impact of disease.

Professor Max Wicha of the University of Michigan, USA, is the founding and current Director of the University of Michigan’s Comprehensive Cancer Center, a post he has held for over 25 years. He gave the closing keynote lecture on targeting breast cancer stem cells and provided an ideal end to the meeting, focussing on the clinical impact of the interaction between stem cells and the stroma in breast cancer.

The conference was very successful and allowed budding researchers an opportunity to share their work with the rest of the research community. The opportunity to exchange ideas and information was a major highlight and delegates were encouraged by the presentation of significant progress that had already been made in the field. The next IABCR Conference will be held in September 2014 in Sydney, Australia.

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**Meetings Sponsored by EACR**

EACR continues to grant meeting sponsorship, providing support to valuable scientific meetings. As well as speaker sponsorship the Association often provides poster prizes, awards and bursaries at Sponsored Meetings.

**FEBBS Workshop and Nova Nordisk Fonden Research Symposium**

‘Dynamics of Cell Signal Systems’

Oslo, Norway  
27 - 30 September 2012

This workshop was part of a series of biennial international meetings with particular focus on cell signalling and protein phosphorylation. A total of 87 participants attended the workshop, which focussed on signal network analyses that integrate parallel processes using systems biology. The workshop also covered a broad range of anchored and compartmentalised signalling processes and their role in regulating physiological and cellular functions in a variety of organ systems.

The Scientific Organising Committee were Johannes L. Bos, Ivan Dikic, Margaret Frame, Richard Marais, John D. Scott and Kjetil Tasken.

EACR sponsored three poster awards and the EACR sponsored speaker was Professor Erich Nigg of the University of Basel, Switzerland, who presented a talk entitled ‘NOSIP is a novel component of protein phosphatase complexes in embryonic development’.

The venue for the meeting was the Norwegian Medical Association Conference Centre, Sonia Moria, in the hills surrounding the city of Oslo.

EACR Poster Prizes

A total of 36 abstracts were submitted for the poster session. The posters were displayed on the first evening in designated rooms near where the lectures were held.

The poster award committee consisted of Angeliki Malliri (Paterson Institute for Cancer Research, Manchester), Roger Davis (University of Massachusetts, Boston) and Carol Mackintosh (University of Dundee) and on Friday evening they announced the three winners of the EACR poster awards.

The prize for best poster went to Mariëke H. Peuscher (Netherlands Cancer Institute) with the title ‘A functional genetic screen identifies novel factors in the cellular response to telomere damage’. The second prize went to Rebeca Ulmann (Goethe University School of Medicine, Frankfurt) with the poster ‘An acetylation switch regulates SUMO dependent protein interaction networks’ and the third prize was given to Melike Hoffmeister (University of Frankfurt Medical School) with the title ‘NOB5P1 is a novel component of protein phosphatase complexes in embryonic development’.

Dr. Fernando Calvo

The organising committee were very grateful to the EACR for their generous sponsorship. The EACR poster prizes were awarded to two postdoctoral researchers: Dr Albana Gatelli from the Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research in Basel, Switzerland, and Dr Fernando Calvo from the Cancer Research UK London Research Institute. Albana’s poster focussed on ‘Persistent exposure to Ret pathway activation during ER pathway inhibition promotes IL6 production in breast cancer cells: implication for endocrine-resistance’. Fernando presented his research on ‘Targeting tumour stromal fibroblasts to prevent breast cancer dissemination’. The EACR also sponsored the e-Conference newsletter, which provided potential delegates with regular updates.

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The understanding of molecular and cellular mechanisms governing angiogenesis is of great interest since this biological phenomenon is involved in many physiological and pathological conditions. In recent years, anti-angiogenic therapy has become real. Although the first approval for anti-angiogenic drugs was for cancer therapy, anti-angiogenesis therapy has also found many applications for ocular neovascular diseases, such as age-related macular degeneration.

The aim of the workshop ‘Molecular and Cellular Mechanism in Angiogenesis’, organised by Jayakrishna Ambati (University of Kentucky, Lexington, USA) Michele De Palma (The Swiss Institute for Experimental Cancer Research, Lausanne, Switzerland) and Sandro De Falco (Institute of Genetics and Biophysics “A. Buzzati-­Traverso”, CNR, Naples, Italy) was to bring together leading scientists and young scientists from across the world to discuss the latest advancement on molecular pathways and on the multiple cellular actors, mainly inflammatory cells, involved in new vessel formation, as well as on the latest therapeutic perspectives for cancer and ocular neovascular diseases.

All the activity of the conference was held at Hotel La Palma, on the wonderful island of Capri. This facilitated, together with two poster sessions and ‘dinner meet the experts’ sessions, intense exchange of ideas between the 80 attendants and the 20 leading scientists invited as speakers. Among the 80 abstracts presented, 11 were chosen for short talks, while all the others were presented as posters, which were displayed for the duration of the workshop.

This workshop was possible thanks to the support of FEBS advanced course programme. Importantly, FEBS gave also the opportunity to 10 European and 5 non-European PhD student or early post-docs to attend the workshop thanks to a youth travel fund.

The European Association for Cancer Research (EACR), the Association for International Cancer Research (AICR), the Life Sciences Research Partners vzw, Cell Death & Differentiation journal, the ‘Provincia di Napoli’, the Institute of Genetics and Biophysics – CNR, and Allergan company also generously supported the workshop.

The director of the Institute of Genetics and Biophysics,
Prof. Antonio Baldini, opened the workshop and also introduced the ‘Grazziella Persico lecture’ held by Prof. Peter Carmeliet.

Thereafter three intense days followed with a fully-packed programme articulated in four main sessions: Molecular Signalling in Angiogenesis, Bone Marrow-derived and Inflammatory Cells in Angiogenesis, Ocular Neovascularisation, and Therapeutic Modulation of Angiogenesis, in which recent and unpublished data of the highest quality were presented and discussed.

The workshop was closed by Prof. Doug Hanahan with concluding remarks on ‘Horizons in Angiogenesis Research’.

EACR Poster Prizes

The conference was enriched by presentations from young scientists, consisting of 9 selected short talks and 132 poster presentations during two dedicated poster sessions.

The sessions were extremely lively and gave rise to stimulating discussions among the participants. From the 132 poster presentations, 3 were selected for the EACR sponsored poster prizes. The jury, consisting of a member of the organising committee as well as conference speakers, after much deliberation chose the following posters:

First prize
Igor Vivanco from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre, NY, for his presentation ‘Differential sensitivity of glioma- versus lung cancer-specific EGFR mutations to EGFR kinase inhibitors’.

Second prize
Jian Hou and Ola Sabet from the Max Planck Institute for Molecular Physiology in Dortmund, for their poster ‘Visualizing Eph receptor tyrosine kinase activity in live cells’.

Third prize
Niko Bretz, from the German Cancer Research Centre DKFZ in Heidelberg, for his poster presentation ‘CD24 regulates tumour cell behaviour in a-Src/STAT dependent fashion’.

Hotel Croatia on the beautiful bay of Cavtat near Dubrovnik again provided a beautiful setting for this conference and ample opportunity for profitable interactions during both the scientific and social programme of the conference.

The organising committee is extremely grateful for the support provided by the EACR, which helped to ensure the success of the conference.
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NCRI Cancer Conference
Liverpool, UK
4 – 7 November 2012
This year’s NCRI Cancer Conference was a great success, 2000 attendees - participants, sponsors, speakers, exhibitors and committee members - shared their enthusiasm and latest news in cancer research.

EACR Travel Awards
The National Cancer Research Institute is grateful to the EACR for supporting travel awards for delegates to attend the 2012 NCRI Cancer Conference. This bursary was designed specifically to assist delegates from the EU with their registration, accommodation and travel costs.

Report from one of the recipients
As a PhD student there are limited funds to travel to conferences and events, but EACR’s travel award provided me the opportunity to attend the 2012 NCRI Cancer Conference. This award enabled me to give a poster presentation about my research. It focuses on developing criteria for excellence in translational research to identify and designate cancer centres in Europe as excellent.
Apart from presenting my poster, I participated in a number of sessions that were particularly related to translational research. Perhaps more especially, I was able to extend my professional network by meeting people who have some understanding of and experience in my field of research or those areas of research that can inform it. At the same time people who connected with me during the poster session and at other times see my research as relevant to their own areas of work.
So, for me the bottom line for this is that it ends up as a two-way sharing of knowledge as well as knowing that there are other people in my specific field of research that I can continue to build future professional relationships with. I hope that EACR continue their valuable work in this respect and provide more PhD students with such opportunities in the future.
Abinaya Rajan
PhD Researcher in Accreditation & Designation of Cancer Research Centres in Europe
Netherlands Cancer Institute-Antoni van Leeuwenhoek Cancer Hospital, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

What is EACR meeting sponsorship?
• EACR acts as a sponsoring agent for scientific meetings where cancer research is a major topic in the programme.
• Meetings should be organised by a European institute or organisation and usually take place in Europe. Lectures should be delivered in English.
• Meetings should expect to attract at least 90 participants in order to be eligible for sponsorship.
• Sponsorship is up to €2000 with additional amounts for sponsored speaker expenses and EACR Poster Prizes.
• There are three deadlines per year for scientific organising committees to apply for EACR meeting sponsorship: 31 December, 30 April and 31 August.
• At least one member of the Organising Committee should be a standing member of the EACR with a minimum of three years of membership.
• For further details and full eligibility requirements, please visit the EACR website:
www.eacr.org/meetings/sponsor_guidelines.php
HCC International Research Conference on Liver Cancer

“From Molecular Pathogenesis to Targeted Therapies”
Heidelberg, Germany
5 – 7 July 2012

From July 5-7 2012 the International Research Conference on Liver Cancer took place in the Conference Center of the German Cancer Research Center Heidelberg. The conference was initiated and organised by the SFB/TRR77 (www.livercancer.de) of the German Research Foundation (DFG), endorsed by the EACR and the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL). The meeting was well attended by over 200 scientists from all around the world.

About 120 presentations (about 100 posters, from which 40 were selected also for oral presentation, and 29 invited lectures from leading scientists of the field) displayed the cutting edge of molecular liver cancer research in the eight thematic areas. These ranged from infections/inflammation and HCC over high-throughput and screening studies, over functional approaches to translation and novel therapeutic approaches. The stage was set by Nobel laureate Harald zur Hausen with his keynote lecture on “Vaccination against Cancer: results and perspectives.” This high level was carried on throughout the further presentations made at the conference.

Decisive for the scientific level and the success of the conference was the excellent level of the abstract contributions, the majority of which were contributed by junior researchers. Together with the promising attendance it revealed the positive perspective and rising impact of molecular liver cancer research. Especially dedicated and ample time slots were provided for discussions with regards to the posters, giving every participant sufficient time to exchange new ideas and to initiate new scientific cooperations. It was the strong feeling of all participants that the community needs such a meeting which is intended to resume in a biannual manner.

EACR Poster Prizes

Due to the sponsorship by the EACR, the three best poster presentations as identified by the international poster award committee received the “EACR Poster Prize”, with prize money of €500 each.

The poster prize winners were:

G. Amaddeo (Paris, France): “Interferon Regulatory Factor 2 (IRF2) is a new tumor suppressor gene in HBV related hepatocellular carcinomas acting by regulating TP53 pathway”
F. Böhm (Zurich, Switzerland): “The MCL-1delHEP mouse model of hepatocarcinogenesis reveals overlapping gene expression profiles with human hepatocellular carcinomas”
S. Singer (Heidelberg, Germany): “Selective p53 target gene regulation by the nuclear pore component Nup98 in HCC”

The organizers of the conference: P. Schirmacher (Heidelberg, right) and M. P. Manns (Hanover, left) flanking Nobel laureate and Keynote speaker H. zur Hausen (Heidelberg)

29th Genes and Cancer Meeting

Warwick, UK
10 – 12 December 2012

The ‘Genes and Cancer’ organising committee were very grateful for the sponsorship provided by EACR which helped ensure the success of our 29th meeting. In addition to the high quality of all presentations, the meeting featured a vibrant poster session, as well as spirited discussions during coffee breaks and at the conference dinner. EACR kindly supported this year’s poster prizes. This years winners were, Alice Newman (Edinburgh, UK) (1st Prize), Jackie Butterworth (Newcastle, UK) (2nd Prize) and Alex Greenhough (Bristol, UK) (3rd Prize).

Speakers on Metabolism and Stress included Rene Medena (Amsterdam, Holland), Markus Raizer (Cambridge, UK) and Sally Kornbluth (Duke, USA) who specifically discussed the mechanism by which the initiator caspase-2 is modulated by metabolism. She presented work demonstrating that Glucose-6-phosphate inhibits caspase-2 activity by preventing cytochrome c release from the mitochondria. This was followed by equally excellent talks by Eyal Gottlieb (Glasgow, UK), Christof Niehrs (Heidelberg, Germany) and two short talks chosen from the abstracts submitted at registration. These were delivered by Olivier Pardo (London, UK) and Mary Gagou (Sheffield, UK).

For the Keynote speaker, we aim to choose someone who has made and continues to make an exceptional impact of our understanding of Cancer Biology. This year we were grateful to have Nobel Perrimon (Harvard Medical School, USA) fill this role. Professor Perrimon discussed how his work generating genetic and screening tools has increased our understanding of Cancer Biology. He also presented an overview of the X-linked Inhibitor of Apoptosis (XIAP) protein in molecular and cell biology, as well as in human disease. Sonia Rocha (Dundee, UK) discussed hypoxia (reduced levels of normal oxygen), and the regulation of the master hypoxia transcription factor, HIF, in response to hypoxia. Vinay Tergonkar (Singapore) then presented work on how two hallmarks of cancer biology – tumor promotion inflammation and replicative immortality – can be linked by the ability of telomerase to regulate NF-kB dependent gene expression. Robin Fahrbus (Paris, France) presented evidence that the mRNA and protein of p53 have co-evolved to allow regulation of both by Mdm2 whilst Jason Carroll (Cambridge, UK) presented his work on Estrogen Receptor a (ERa) and breast cancer. Once again two short talks were selected from the abstracts and presented by Arturo Sala (London, UK) and Dina Dikovskaya (Glasgow, UK).

Charles Swanton (London, UK) discussed the implications of genetic intratumour heterogeneity for the development and treatment of cancer. Madalena Tarsounas (Oxford, UK) focused on the role of the tumour suppressor and DNA repair genes BRCA1 and BRCA2. Daniel Peeper (Amsterdam, Netherlands) presented his recent work on Estrogen Receptor a (ERa) and breast cancer. Once again two short talks were selected from the abstracts and presented by Ilaria Malanchi (London, UK), who presented her work on Cancer Stem Cells (CSCs) in breast cancer and their potential for metastasis.

Seamus Martin (Dublin, Ireland) discussed how Death Receptor induced apoptosis is still able to induce inflammation with the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines, going against the previous notion that apoptosis was a non-inflammatory process. Giorgio Stassi (Palermo, Italy) discussed his work on how CD44v6 positive colorectal cancer cells are metastatic cells and loss of CD44v6 permits tumorigenicity but not metastasis. Maria Eugenia Soriano, from Luca Scorrano’s lab (Geneva, Switzerland), presented data on the importance of mitochondrial ultrastructural and morphological changes and the role of the mitochondrial shape protein Opal1 in cell death. This was followed by Ilaria Malanchi (London, UK), who presented her work on Cancer Stem Cells (CSCs) in breast cancer and their potential for metastasis.

EACR Poster Prize Winners Alice Newman (Edinburgh, UK) Jackie Butterworth (Newcastle, UK) and Alex Greenhough (Bristol, UK)
international symposium: personalised cancer care

oslo, norway
7 - 9 september 2012

the oslo university hospital, the k.g. jebsen centre for breast cancer research, the radiumhospital foundation and the fritz-bender-foundation designed under the conference chairs (e. mich, k.s. zaenker, a-l. barræsen-dale) a program at the cutting edge of “personalised cancer care: risk prediction, early diagnosis, progression and therapy resistance”. close to 200 scientists from all over the world participated. the oral presentations concerned six scientific areas: (1) genetic profiling of patients, prediction of risk, late side effects, (2) molecular profiling of tumors and metamastases, (3) tumor-host microenvironment interaction and metabolism, (4) targeted therapy, (5) translation and (6) informed consent, ethical challenges and communication. a poster sessions with close to 50 posters was very well attended.

leroy hood, (seattle, us) gave the keynote lecture on: systems cancer medicine: towards realization of predictive, preventive, personalized and participatory (p4) medicine. in the foreseeable future, clinicians, biomedical researchers, patients and consumers will be increasingly confronted with a flood of information, e.g. whole genome sequences, molecular profiling of diseased tissues, and multi-analytic blood testing of biomarker panels. the vision for p4 medicine is that each individual/patient will be associated with a virtual data cloud of billions of data points and that the bio-information technology will be available to reduce this enormous data dimensionally to simple hypotheses about health and/or diseases for each individual. this reflects a new paradigm of a “holistic systems approach” to the term “prognosis” as suggested by the audience. the end message was: “store the data in the clouds, share them with scientists worldwide and one will get a answer for the progress of life science to move forward and look at nature’s unique concept of truth.”

sir bruce ponder (cambridge uk) gave the thoresens lecture on: “clinical applications of genome-wide association study data: lessons from breast and prostate cancer”. to date, 22 common breast cancer susceptibility loci have been identified accounting for about 8% of the heritability of the disease. from two independent genome-wide association studies (gwas), his group identified three new breast cancer risk loci that showed a crucial role in mammary development and establishment of bone metastasis.

michael stratton (hinxton, uk) spoke about driver mutations of which more than 400 have been identified, which convert a normal cell into a cancer cell. one to 10 mutations gives the cancer cell a clonal growth advantage, whereas passenger mutations, (100-10000) are a reflection of the number of mitoses. he introduced a catalogue of somatic driver mutations from 21 breast cancers and applied mathematical methods to extract mutational signatures of the underlying processes. a remarkable phenomenon of localised hypermutation, termed “kateagis” was observed. regions of kateagis differed between cancers but usually co-localised with somatic rearrangements. the mechanisms underlying most of these mutational signatures are unknown, but a role of apropbe family of cyclidine deaminases is proposed.

Carlos Caldas (Cambridge, UK) brought the good news for breast cancer: “all in all, the 15 years survival rate is 80%, but this success story is bought by an overtreatment of many women; however, within this context, tamoxifen saved more lives than any other therapy. an integrated analysis of copy number variants and snps and acquired somatic copy number aberrations (cnas) of 2000 breast cancer samples revealed novel subgroups. the integrative view of the genome and transcriptome of a breast cancer population provides a novel molecular stratification, derived from the impact of somatic cnas on the transcriptome.

Larry Norton (New York, USA) addressed personalised medicine. if personalised medicine is an answer for new therapies and changing clinical enigmas: then: i) what are novel questions to be asked, ii) what is the grade of complexity and iii) how do we deal with this complexity? the pervasive albatross of metastasis necessitates improved prevention and treatment of metastasis formation. he offers a new theory of metastasis formation, termed “self-seeding”. the “self-seeding” paradigm, well validated in mathematical, experimental and animal models, challenges the notion that cancer cells that leave a primary tumor, unidirectionally seed metastases in regional lymph nodes and/or distant sites. in contrast, there is mounting evidence that circulating tumor cells can move multi-directionally, seeding not only at distant sites but also in the tumor of origin.

oli kaalliiromi (turku, finland) spoke about systems medicine and implementing individualised medicine in the clinic. the question is: how do we get progress in medicine? there are many obstacles, e.g. off-label use of medication, to find new indications for already old established drugs, regulatory, ethical and educational concerns and time and money. furthermore there are business, administrative and social mindsets in order to bridge the gap between scientists, physicians and patients. he introduced an individualised concept for systems medicine in aml to implement personalised medicine in the clinical setting. sequential samples of aml patients at different stages of disease progression were biobanked, exome and rna sequences as well as phosphoproteomics profiling of the samples were performed.

rene bernards (amsterdam, the netherlands) gave the eacr lecture on functional genetics and optimising the treatment of cancer. tumors harboring so-called driver mutations frequently exhibit striking sensitivities to inhibition of these oncogenic driver pathways, a principle referred to as oncogene addiction. understanding drug resistance mechanisms will help design more efficient combination treatment strategies that help block resistance mechanisms before they become clinically manifested. fresh frozen tumor samples from 381 colorectal cancer patients were collected and mutations in kras (30.2%), braf (11.0%), and pik3ca (11.5%) were assessed. the identified signature revealed mechanisms that can activate erk/mek/pank pathway in kras, braf and pik3ca wild type patients. the combined signature is associated with response to cetuximab treatment in patients with metastatic colorectal cancer. a combined oncogenic pathway signature allows to identify patients with an active egfr signaling pathway that could benefit from downstream pathway inhibition.

EACR Poster Prize winner

Sandra levelet won the EACR poster prize for her work entitled "BMP9 and BMP10 are critical for post-natal retinal vascular remodelling". sandrine is a 3rd year’s PhD student who works in the grenoble laboratory biology of cancer and infection (UMR1036), in dr sabine Billy’s lab. sandrine started her thesis after graduating from the French engineering school institut national des sciences appliquées in lyon (INSA). before embracing her scientific life, she was a great sportswoman, notably winning five world champion in sport climbing.

Genome Mills and Brian Leyland-Jones

EACR Poster Prize winner Sandra Levelet

4th Congress of the French Society of Angiogenesis

Monaco
28 - 30 october 2012

This conference was under the patronage of his highness prince albert ii, a hallmark of the high interest in monaco in the medical sciences. the purpose of the meeting was to combine high standard science with excellent usability, promoting trade and the initiation of new scientific collaborations. another goal was to enable young researchers to present their results in a warm atmosphere and to prepare them for competitive recruitment at the CNSR, INSEMr or university level. all of these objectives have been achieved, but it is always possible to improve on past successes and we endeavour to remain vigilant about maintaining high quality standards. we believe that the use of English language for communication at the meeting allows us to call this a truly “European Congress”. the use of English also allows interaction with international speakers and is a sign of our respect towards them.

we reiterate here our thanks to the sponsors who have made this conference a reality, and helped us work under the best possible conditions. it was the first time that i can recall so many leading companies participating in this event. this is a strong and encouraging sign of their interest in our work. we must now pass the “torch” to future organisers of the 5th Congress of the SFA in spring 2014 in Chamonix. i do not doubt their ability to maintain a high standard and make sure the SFA shines in France but also in Europe and internationally in the future. i hope that EACR will participate in the sponsorship of the future meeting and continue their support of young researchers.

The results presented in this poster demonstrate that BMP9 and BMP10 are important regulators of postnatal retinal angiogenesis. for the first time, BMP10 is shown to be involved in angiogenesis and to substitute for the loss of BMP9. furthermore, these results support an important crosstalk between the BMP10/20, the Notch and the apelin pathways during postnatal angiogenesis. this work has recently been published in blood (ricard et al., 2012, 119, 6162-6171).
The 12th International Conference on Progress in Vaccination against Cancer
Nottingham, UK, 11 - 13 September 2012

The 12th Annual Conference on Progress in Vaccination against Cancer (PIVAC) was held in Nottingham. It was hosted at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and attracted over 120 delegates from different parts of the world. The conference was preceded by a two day Workshop on immune monitoring which was hosted by Cellular Technology Ltd at the John van Geest Cancer Research Centre. The conference commenced with a welcome talk given by the Chair of Organising Committee, Professor Robert C. Rees.

The keynote speech in the “T cell activity and control session” was given by one of the pioneers in modern immunotherapy, Pierre van der Bruggen (Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Brussels, Belgium). Pierre emphasised the importance of correcting impaired function of tumour infiltrating cytotoxic T lymphocytes (CTLs) by targeting compounds in the tumour extracellular matrix. Following on with the theme, Michael Lotze (University of Pittsburgh, USA) spoke next, followed by Suzanne Ostrand Rosenberg (University of Maryland, Baltimore, USA) who highlighted the role of myeloid-derived suppressor cells in inhibiting anti-tumour immunity and promoting tumour progression via their establishment of an immunosuppressive environment.

The second day of the conference began by focussing on the importance of long peptide vaccines (Francine Jotereau, Université de Nantes, France) and novel DNA vaccine approaches for improving the immunogenicity of identified PAP peptide epitopes (Jaemy Safi, John van Geest Cancer Research Centre, Nottingham Trent University, UK). Strategies which involve the pooling of multiple peptides in order to improve T cell responses and longer overall survival in advanced renal cell carcinoma and colorectal cancer was presented by Steffen Walter (Immatics biotechnologies GmbH, Germany). On the final day Andrew Sewell (Cardiff University, UK) logically illustrated the existence of extensive cross-reactivity within the T cell repertoire and the concept of TCR degeneracy illustrated the existence of extensive cross-reactivity within. The closing message was given by Enricho Mihich (Roswell Park Cancer Institute, USA) who also paid tribute to the work of Robert Baldwin who was a Founder Editor of Cancer Immunology and Immunotherapy and a pioneer in immunotherapy. The take home message was that, although we recognise the many complexities of tumour immunity which contribute to immune surveillance and tumour rejection, the fundamental principles underpinning immunotherapy hold true - the need to activate immunity to defined tumour antigens and abrogate mechanisms which allow tumour escape.

Over 30 posters highlighted the quality of and enthusiasm for tumour immunotherapy. Poster prizes were awarded to Ru chaud Sutavani (The University of Nottingham) and Karina Silina (Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre). The organisers thanked all of the Sponsors and Kathryn Wass and Rachel Warden for their effective contribution to the conference. The gathering ended with the “Sheriff’s Medieval Banquet at the Galleries of Justice Museum.”

Eric Tartour (Université Paris Descartes, France) later emphasised the benefit of preferentially inducing an anti-tumour response at the mucosal anatomic site of tumours using orthotopic models of head and neck and lung cancers and an in-house generated Shigatoxin (STxB) DNA vector. The session continued with the theme of targeted approaches by demonstrating the antigenic potential of a novel biomarker (Engrailed-2) during Hardev Pandha’s talk (University of Surrey, UK). The “Host and Tumour Derived Factors” session began with Gabriele Multhoff (Technische Universität München, Munich, Germany) highlighting the importance of positive bystander effects that are generated after radiation therapy on immune effector cells, with a special emphasis on a unique form of Hsp70 which is selectively expressed on cancer cells. The concluding session of the conference further highlighted the importance of NK cells in tumour killing (Raquel Tarazona University of Extremadura, Cáceres, Spain) using a melanoma cell line model. Lastly, Thorald van Hall (Leiden Medical Centre, Netherlands) concluded the meeting and extended a warm invitation for delegates to attend PIVAC-13 which will be held in Amsterdam.

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