Meetings Sponsored by EACR

EACR continues to grant meeting sponsorship, providing support to valuable scientific meetings. As well as speaker sponsorship we often provide poster prizes, awards and bursaries.

7th International PhD Student Cancer Conference

London
19-21 June 2013

The seventh annual International PhD Student Cancer Conference was hosted by students from the London Research Institute (LRI). The Conference was held jointly at University College London (UCL) and the LRI’s Lincoln’s Inn Fields laboratories.

This joint meeting was attended by PhD students from CRUK funded institutes (LRI, Beatson Institute for Cancer Research, Paterson Institute for Cancer Research and the Cambridge Institute), the Netherlands Cancer Institute, Amsterdam, European School of Molecular Medicine, Milan, German Cancer Research Centre, Heidelberg and CRUK funded students from the UCL Cancer Institute.

Each year, the Conference offers a unique opportunity for graduate students from top international cancer research institutes across Europe to get together to present and share their research experiences and scientific lives in a relaxed and informal environment. Students from all years are invited to participate, with students in more advanced stages of their PhD particularly encouraged to attend and give an oral presentation of their research.

The Conference covered many topics related to cancer, from basic biology to more clinical aspects of the disease, and all attendees presented their research, either in talks or during a poster session. Networking and socialising continued into the evenings of the conference, with ice-breaking games and a barbecue on day one and a Thames river cruise and dinner dance on day two.

In addition to the students’ presentations, the organisers were extremely pleased to host excellent plenary lectures by Professor Lewis Wolpert, Emeritus Professor in Cell and Developmental Biology at University College London, and Professor Cedric Blanpain, Professor of Stem Cell and Development Biology at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium. Professor Wolpert gave a wonderful talk linking the fundamental principles of developmental biology, including his conceptual definition of the ‘french flag’ model of embryonic patterning, to recent discoveries in the field. Professor Blanpain presented a fascinating and detailed summary of the important work currently being undertaken in his laboratory. Both speakers faced numerous excellent questions from the audience after their presentations!

The Organising Committee also planned several breakout sessions during the Conference, including a spirited panel discussion on the controversial open access publishing question, with Prof. Stephen Curry, an active researcher and proponent of open access, Nicola McCarthy, Chief Editor of Nature Reviews Cancer and David Carr, a representative from the Wellcome Trust Policy Team. The students also hosted careers-focused Q&A sessions with current post-docs and ex-PhD students/postdocs who have pursued alternative careers outside academia.

The Conference was a great success enjoyed by all attendees. The Conference organisers would like to thank all sponsors including the EACR which kindly sponsored the poster prizes and networking dinner.
Gliwice Scientific Meetings 2013

Gliwice, Poland
15-16 November 2013

Gliwice Scientific Meetings 2013 (Gliwickie Spotkania Naukowe 2013), a small-scale international conference devoted to cell regulatory mechanisms involved in various cancers was held, for the seventeenth time, at the Educational Centre of the Silesian University of Technology. The event gathered 210 guests from 12 countries from around the globe, including 21 lecturers. Senior students from several local institutions of higher learning also attended.

Topics covered at the meeting involved regulatory mechanisms underlying gene expression in the course of normal and pathological processes at both cellular and higher levels. In particular, six thematic sessions included topics ranging from carcinogenesis and prevention to novel anticancer drugs, regulation of gene expression and replication, cellular pathways driven by reactive oxygen species, DNA repair in ageing and cancerogenesis, cancer proteomics and metabolomics, dietary factors in cancer prevention and cancer killing.

One of the sessions was co-organised and sponsored by the European Association for Cancer Research. Andrew Binns, EACR Senior Membership Coordinator, attended the Meeting and presented the EACR Poster Prize.

The Conference featured a poster session contest with 117 exhibits grouped in the following subject areas: cancer cell biology, cancer therapy and new therapeutics, non-cancerous pathologies, chemical synthesis and analysis, cellular stress, oxidation and DNA repair, normal cell biology, data analysis and computer modelling and, finally, methodology.

The main award went to the team of researchers led by Professor Andrzej Gamian from the Institute of Immunology and Experimental Therapy, Wroclaw, Poland, for their work concerning biocompatibility of nanoparticles loaded with photosensibilisers for practical use in support of anticancer therapy. The second prize went to the team of Dr. Dorota Scieglinska from the MSC Cancer Centre in Gliwice for a presentation concerning the intriguing role of HIF1α in the regulation of HSPA2 in keratinocytes. Lastly, the third prize was awarded to Professor Krzysztof Szyfter’s team from Poznan University for their analyses of CDK1 gene expression in squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx. Another six posters received honourable mention. The Students’ Council acting during the event also gave its own awards for presented work.

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14th International Conference on Progress in Vaccination Against Cancer

Rome, Italy • 24 – 26 September 2014

Abstract submission deadline: 17 July 2014
Registration deadline: 29 August 2014

CONFERENCE CHAIRS
Federica Cavallo, Italy • Emanuela Signori, Italy

INVITED SPEAKERS
Costas Baxevanis, Greece • Philip Bergman, USA • Mario P. Colombo, Italy • Olvera Finn, USA • Federico Garrido, Spain
Luca Gattinoni, USA • Claudia Gravekamp, USA • Alberto Mantovani, Italy • Guillermo Marshall, Argentina • Suzanne Ostrand-Rosenberg, USA • Giorgio Parmiani, Italy • Gregor Sersa, Slovenia; • Justin Teissié, France • Per thor Straten, Denmark Aldo Venuti, Italy • Marij Welters, Netherlands

eacr.org/PIVAC14
FEBS – IGB WORKSHOP: Translating Epigenomes into Functions: a Next-Generation Challenge for Human Disease

Hotel La Palma, Capri, Italy
13-16 October 2013

The impact of epigenetics research has increased exponentially over recent years. Cutting-edge technologies are providing an unprecedented degree of resolution at genomic, spatial and temporal levels. They are offering powerful new insights into the dynamics of epigenetic plasticity and mechanisms underlying development, differentiation and disease. The large amount of multi-dimensional information derived from diverse technology platforms poses multiple challenges for data analysis and interpretation. Integrated analysis of such data is an essential step towards obtaining a unified global view of complex systems, such as development, homeostasis, responses to the environment, and of their defects in disease. Moreover, a move towards a systems biology approach is necessary to understand the functional interplay between epigenetic regulators and to model the dynamic nature of epigenetic systems. This allows predicting how the balance between maintenance and erasure of epigenetic signatures varies in biological processes under normal or pathological conditions.

The aim of the workshop ‘Translating Epigenomes into Functions: a Next-Generation Challenge for Human Disease’, organised by Stephan Beck (UCL Cancer Institute, London, UK), and Maurizio D’Esposito (Institute of Genetics and Biophysics “A. Buzzati-Traverso”, CNR, Naples, Italy) was to bring together leading scientists from the fields of epigenomics, genetics and bioinformatics to discuss the latest findings in this fast developing field.

All the activity of the conference was held at Hotel La Palma, on the wonderful island of Capri. This, together with two poster sessions and a meet the experts dinner session facilitated intense exchange of ideas between epigenomics, genetics and bioinformatics to discuss the latest findings in this fast developing field.

The workshop was closed by the Round Table “Worldwide efforts for epigenome understanding”, in which Prof. Beck, Prof. Henk Stunnenberg (Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Centre, Nijmegen, The Netherlands) and Prof. Giuseppe Testa (IFOM-IEO, Milan, Italy) provided an overview on the international research projects currently involved in translating the epigenomes into functions.

Beside the oral presentations, the poster sessions allowed an informal scientific interaction between trainees and leading scientists in the field. At the end of this successful event, a committee formed by Prof. Genevieve Almouzni, Prof. Ben Tycko, Dr. Chiara Lanzuolo, Dr. Beatrice Bodega and Dr. Arnaud R. Krebs awarded the three best posters thanks to the support of the EACR. The three awards were assigned to (starting from the first to the third best score): Dr. Frank Picard, from Laboratoire de Biométrie et Biologie Evolutive, UMR CNRS – University of Lyon, France, Dr. Angelica Fiedelman, from Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research, Basel, Switzerland and Dr. Floriana Della Ragione, from Institute of Genetics and Biophysics “A Buzzatti Traverso”, Naples, Italy.

Participants at the FEBS-IGB Workshop in Capri
Although early detection of melanoma is correlated with an optimistic survival when this cancer is allowed to progress a staggering number of patients develop resistance to drugs used to treat this cancer. Prof Marais describes the incredible ability of drug resistance to overcome all stages in this cancer’s signalling pathway and is advancing the field of cancer therapeutics with a creative approach for targeting this type of resistance by designing drugs that target multiple signalling branches.

Mike Yaffe During our day-to-day lives our genome copes with the onslaught of 1000 lesions per day. Cells need to make timely decisions as to how and when to repair these breaks and this is facilitated in part by cell cycle checkpoints. Dr. Yaffe describes the role of Brd4 and its molecular interactions with Smc2 in this remarkable process. He goes on to describe the interplay between p53 and Mk2 pathways, whereby tumour cells with defective p53 are rewired to depend on Mk2 instead of p53. Can we target Mk2, which should only affect cancer cells because regular cells have p53? Food for thought.

Mike also presented a fantastic talk with the best tips of how to succeed in manuscript preparation and submission. It was so good that we can’t wait to apply all his advice!

Mike Hall Describes the future of drugs designed to inhibit mTOR. mTOR has been previously shown to regulate both protein and lipid biosynthesis and most recently to be involved in de novo pyrimidine biosynthesis as well. mTOR regulates the entire biological canon. Dr. Hall reveals to his eager audience the key tools that are required to tease apart intricate and ubiquitous pathways such as the mTOR pathway, and describes the details of such proteomic approaches as Super-SILAC. We are wowed by the incredible power and immense data-mining abilities of this high-throughput approach.

Ivan Dikic Talk about ubiquitous – Dr. Dikic takes us through the incredible world of the post-translational modification ubiquitin and its role in autophagy. He postulates that in order to have selective autophagy one must have an autophagic receptor, which should be general and bind to a selective post-translational modification. As it turns out, Salmonella becomes conjugated with ubiquitin in three unique ways and this signal can be amplified and p62 is the receptor for Ub-protein aggregates. It, therefore, may be possible to target this selective autophagy in tumours, as preventing autophagy should cause hypoxia in solid tumours. Another exciting potential cancer therapeutic approach.

Ruth Palmer The ALK signalling pathway is involved in several types of cancers with mutations occurring in 80% of familial neuroblastoma. ALK fusion proteins result in several types of ALK mis-regulation, each posing a unique and challenging biological system to understand in order to devise affective treatment strategies. The challenge of studying ALK is intensified as it acts in concert with Myc-N to drive neuroblastoma yet the knockouts are both viable and healthy. Dr. Palmer describes a powerful model system in drosophila that can be used to study ALK related cancers. Thinking outside the mouse!

Rene Bernardis no stranger to controversy as he boldly states “In twenty years cancer will be a chronic disease with a five year survival rate at 90%”. Yet at the moment,
75% of cancer patients do not benefit from drugs. Dr. Bernards argues that by inhibiting more than one protein in the same pathway we may be able to block negative feedback loops that lead to the prevalence of drug resistant cancers. We will achieve this lofty goal by utilising personalised medicine for better biomarkers and diagnostics and utilise the premise of synthetic lethality to develop drug screens. The striking example he presents of CYLD causing activation of Ikk-b kinase can be inhibited by applying incredible high doses of ibuprofen topically has had incredible success. Lead on Dr. Bernards.

Fred Wittinghofer Cell signalling relies on a fabulous interplay between proteins and post-translational modifications to relay and amply a unique signal between cells. Many of these events depend upon a protein domain known as the G-domain, prevalent in the Ras superfamily of genes. How then are specific signals generated via this seemingly universal system of interacting domains and modifications? Well Dr. Wittinghofer takes us into the atomic world of signalling systems and shows us the surprising diversity of G-domain and Ras superfamily structures. A few hydrogen bonds and amino acid substitutions make a world of difference.

Hans Clevers Be prepared to be wowed by the gorgeous animations of a three dimensional gut model system developed by Dr. Clevers, the model his group has generated to study adult stem cells. So-called “mini-guts” can be recapitulated by a few simple factors on matrigel and their intricate signalling systems can now be studied in detail. We learn about the remarkable relationship between adult stem cells and their niche companion Paneth cells, which ultimately determine the fate of the gut microsystem by converting neighbouring cells into adult stem cells – reprogramming happens in vivo.

Geert Kops Aneuploidy does not cause cancer but it helps to spread cancer and chromosome instability leads to defects in chromosome segregation. Aneuploidy also occurs during development as an estimated 30% of fertilised oocytes have abnormal chromosome numbers. Dr. Kops lectures on the regulation of aneuploidy are riveting. We learn about a kinetochore recruitment system lead by MELT motifs and the BUB protein, which regulates a huge scaffolding assembly that assures appropriate chromosome segregation.

Monica Bettencourt-Dias From Dr. Bettencourt-Dias we learn that DNA segregation and ciliated cells (e.g. rod cells and olfactory neurons) are intimately linked. Both are assembled as centrosome proteins; those involved in chromosome segregation from the centrioles, and those involved in cilia migrate to the plasma membrane. A complex system regulates the number and localisation of centrosomes, and changes in their numbers are widespread in cancers.

Rene Medema The signalling cascade that is initiated by DNA damage results in dramatically different outcomes; apoptosis or checkpoint recovery. A balancing act between p53 and Wip1 allows for this dance between outcomes. Dr. Medema leads us through the amazing post-translational modifications and players that allow for this fine tuned balance.

Roger Daly There are many kinases that have been shown to be involved in human cancers and yet there are very few kinases that are being targeted for cancer therapeutics. This limitation is due in part to our ability to detect and accurately assess the kinases at play in specific oncogenic pathways. He showed us that system biology -based approaches such as proteomics and phosphoproteomics, are the key to detect new kinases and their substrates.

Hans Bos Not only did Dr. Bos discuss the very important Ras superfamily and Src inhibition, he also gave a moving tribute to Dr. Tony Pawson, a revolutionary of the understanding of signal transduction. Dr. Pawson had passed away shortly before the course and had really been looking forward to being involved this year – he was enthusiastic about the intelligence and enthusiasm of the attendees – so Dr. Bos’s tribute was especially touching. We will all miss him dearly, a great loss to the field of cell signalling and cancer biology. And yet we think it was clear during this meeting that the great science Dr. Pawson helped pioneered is being taken up and is moving forward in incredible ways, and in this way Dr. Pawson will always live on.
35th Annual Lorne Genome Conference
Mantra Lorne, Victoria, Australia
17-19 February 2013

Australia’s foremost conference on the Organisation and Expression of the Genome

The 34th Lorne Genome Conference, chaired by Dr Archa Fox and Co-Chaired by Prof Jozef Gecz, was held once again in the Victorian coastal town of Lorne and was attended by over 400 scientists from Australia and around the world.

Topics covered at the meeting included
- Chromatin Structure
- Comparative Genomics and Evolution
- Computational Biology
- Developmental Genetics
- Disease Genetics and Medical Genomics
- Emerging Technologies
- Regulation of Gene Expression
- Systems Biology Nuclear Organisation
- Transcriptional Networks
- RNA Regulation
- Epigenetics

The meeting welcomed 23 prominent national and international presenters and delegates were treated to very high calibre talks. Coveted awards were presented to the successful winners and the prestigious Julian Wells medal was won by Professor Simon Foote (Macquarie University) for his contribution to Australian research into the organisation and expression of the genome.

The conference welcomed Professor Charles Swanton (University College London) thanks to EACR’s support. Prof Swanton’s presentation addressed his work on the molecular heterogeneity on both spatial and temporal scales that he has found within single tumours. His talked on the critical role that genomic instability plays in cancer, and how using an evolutionary framework to understand tumour development can help us to reveal more about the forces that drive cancer progression.

The Lorne Genome Meeting would like to thank EACR for the opportunity to hear Professor Swanton speak, with this funding enabling us to continue to promote exciting recent developments in cancer research as a central theme of the meeting.

Two vibrant poster sessions (consisting of over 165 posters) held over the first and second evenings, saw invited speakers engaging with all poster presenters as they assisted with judging of coveted Student Poster awards. Invited speakers also participated in a special one on one lunch to mentor and discuss work with student delegates.

The 2014 meeting was held from 16-18 February chaired by Prof Jozef Gecz and co-chaired by Dr Anne Voss and once again cancer genomics was strongly featured in the programme.

The 40th Annual Meeting of the European Radiation Research Society
Dublin Castle, Dublin, Ireland
1-5 September 2013

This year, Dublin Castle, built in 1204, was an ideal central venue for forging new interactions within a beautiful and historic setting. This was helped by wall to wall sunshine and daily temperatures of 22-24°C; a rare event in the Emerald Isle.

With about 305 scientists representing 26 countries, the conference was a great success. Four keynote lectures, three prestigious award lectures, 32 invited speakers, 49 proffered papers, 41 oral posters and 188 posters were delivered in 15 scientific sessions covering all of the major disciplines of radiation science, including physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, and radiation protection, with a ‘Clinical Day’ focused on cancer treatment and prevention.

Significantly, 30% of the participants were graduate students or early career investigators emphasising the continued importance of this area of research as a chosen pathway for many budding young scientists. This was facilitated through 27 Young Investigator travel awards provided by the European (ERRS), UK (ARR), Irish (IRRS), US (RRS), Italian (SIRR) and Polish (PPRS) Societies for Radiation Research and the LH Gray Trust. All of the Young Investigators gave excellent talks in the various proffered paper and oral poster sessions. In addition, 15 poster prizes were awarded by ERRS, ARR and IRRS. These enthusiastic early career investigators will surely secure a strong future for our discipline.

The first day started with a plenary lecture on Radiation Chemistry by the internationally renowned Dr Jean-Luc Ravanat (CEA-Grenoble) who gave an excellent lecture on the chemical aspects of radiation-induced DNA lesions and development of analytical tools to measure these lesions in cells. This was followed by an excellent set of parallel sessions on ‘DNA Damage and Repair’ and ‘Non-ionising radiation.’ The first by Dr Don Jones (University of Leicester) updated us on the DNA damage comet assay and its clinical utility for predicting radio- and chemosensitivity of bladder tumours, whilst Dr Rhona Anderson of Brunel University, gave a fascinating and ‘colourful’ talk on the role chromosome territories in radiation-induced chromosomal re-arrangements highlighting the importance of cellular geometry for the induction of aberrations of varying complexity after exposure to both low and high LET radiation.

In the parallel session, Prof Mark Birch-Machin (Newcastle University) gave us an absorbing lecture on the role of mitochondria in photo-ageing and skin cancer, whilst Prof Voram Palti, NovaCure Ltd, Israel, gave an exciting talk on the new therapeutic approaches harnessing alternating electric fields for the treatment of patients. Indeed this therapy received FDA approval in 2011 and is currently...
commercially available in close to 100 medical centres in the US and Europe.

Monday afternoon saw the first of our prize lectures by Prof Penny Jeggo (University of Sussex) who gave the Silvanus Thompson Memorial Lecture (BIR). This was a real inspiration to promising female scientists, providing encouragement to young mothers about what they can achieve when they put their minds to it. With a plethora of high impact publications in Nature, Cell, EMBO and PNAS, Penny took the audience through her journey on understanding the damage response processes following exposure to ionising radiation. Other highlights of the day included a session on ‘Radiosensitivity and normal tissue damage’ where Prof Keith Caldecott (University of Birmingham) continued on the theme of DNA repair looking at NHEJ and the radiosensitivity associated with biallelic mutation of the ATM gene, respectively. The day was completed by a busy poster session followed by an ‘optional’ 5km run in Dublin’s Phoenix park; others chose to go to one of many lively Dublin pubs. Regardless, we all went to bed exhausted.

Tuesday started with a superb lecture by the eminent award winning Prof Martin Brown (Stanford University) who enlightened delegates with a novel approach to targeting tumours by preventing vasculogenesis initiated by CD11b+ myelomonocytic cells. He was able to demonstrate that blocking these cells can be highly effective at preventing tumour regrowth following radiotherapy, representing a new paradigm for the treatment of cancer. This was followed by a fascinating session on novel strategies to target treatment resistant cancer stem cells. Dr Gillian Farnie (University of Manchester) presented elegant data to show an increase in this cell population following radiotherapy and highlighted the use of the histone deacetylase inhibitor, Vorinostat, to differentiate BCSCs and FAK inhibitors to disrupt BCSC regulation. A fascinating talk by Dr Robert Coppes (University of Groningen) provided compelling evidence that stem cells could be used to reduce radiation-induced normal tissue damage to salivary glands following radiotherapy. The afternoon saw another female medal winner, Prof Stephanie McKeown (University of Ulster) present the Weiss Medal lecture for her contribution to the understanding of hypoxia on tumour progression and how targeting these cells is paving the way for novel approaches to the treatment of cancer.

In two further sessions Prof Mary Helen Barcellos-Hoff, (New York University) Prof Brad Wouters, (Ontario Institute for Cancer Research) and Dr Ester Hammond (University of Oxford) gave excellent talks on biomarkers and various approaches to targeting the tumour microenvironment.

Wednesday began with two clinical sessions generously sponsored by the EACR. This was initiated by a stimulating and inspirational talk by Prof Rob Bristow (University of Toronto) who dedicated his lecture to the late Prof Donal Hollywood who will be sadly missed by the radiotherapy community in Ireland and indeed worldwide. Rob demonstrated how genomics and transcriptomics could be used as powerful tools to personalise radiotherapy to patients most likely to respond.

The EACR sponsored lectures by Prof Tony Lomax (Paul Scherrer Institute) and Prof Anne Hansen Ree (University of Oslo) provided an insight into emerging new therapeutic approaches such as the advances and limitations of particle therapy, new nanotechnologies such as crystalline hafnium oxide, NBTXR3 nanoparticles that can be used to sensitize tumours to radiotherapy because of their ability to deposit high amounts of energy within tumour cells and the use histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors as potent radiosensitisers. New approaches to prognosticate outcomes following radiotherapy using the hypoxic PET tracer [18F]HX4, was elegantly presented by EACR sponsored Prof Philippe Lambin, Maastricht University, where he demonstrated much improved contrast than the commonly used hypoxia tracers[18F]FMISO or [18F]FAZA.

Other excellent speakers during the Clinical Day were Dr Laurent Levy, Prof Anthony Chalmers and Prof Marco Durante, who delivered a wonderful Bacq and Alexander Award lecture on particle therapy. The day was finished off by a wonderful evening of Irish music and dancing at the Mansion House Dublin. The final day saw an excellent plenary lecture on radiation protection by Prof David Brenner (Columbia University).

Overall, this year’s meeting was a great success with quality presentations throughout. We had 4 days of cutting edge high quality science with great interaction and discussion at all levels. We would like to say a big thank you to EACR for their support of the clinical day allowing us to invite some excellent European speakers that helped to demonstrate translation of radiation biology to the clinic.
The 1st Cancer Research Center of Lyon (CRCL) Symposium

The Palais des Congrès de Lyon
13-15 of February 2013

This was the first event of this size for research in oncology in the Rhône-Alpes region. 19 internationally known researchers, from 8 countries, were invited to present their work on the latest advances in cancer research. To complete this prestigious program, 18 oral presentations from young researchers were selected based on their abstracts. In addition, the Symposium was an event designed to promote the international visibility of the CRCL, and to showcase the quality of its basic and translational research.

The organising committee was formed during 2012, composed of members of the CRCL, whose diverse missions were to establish the scientific programme of the Symposium, to ensure the promotion of the event to participants and potential sponsors as well as through local, national, and international networks, and to coordinate the logistics of the event with the University Lyon I Convention Office.

More than 550 academic researchers, students, doctors, or members of industry from a number of countries including the United States, Japan, England, Germany, Poland, China and South Korea came together at the Palais des Congrès de Lyon. In coherence with the strategy of the CRCL, the choice was made to center the scientific themes of the Symposium on the fundamental aspects of the biology of cancer, paying particular attention to the interactions between basic, clinical, and translational research.

Five plenary sessions were therefore organised in:
- Immunosurveillance, inflammation and cancer
- Reactivation of embryonic programs and tumour escape
- Viral infections and cancer
- Genetics, epigenetics and tumour progression
- Escape from targeted therapies

After the opening by Alain Puisieux, director of the CRCL, we had the honor to welcome, as the keynote speaker, Mina Bissell, researcher at the Lawrence Berkely National Laboratory in California. Mina Bissel is internationally recognised for her major contributions throughout her career with respect to breast cancer and the role of the microenvironment of the tumour on the expression of genes in both normal and cancerous tissue. Her oral presentation “Why don’t we get more cancers? The answer is outside the cell!” marked by the eloquence and passion of Prof. Bissell, was certainly a catalyst for further implication in cancer research, particularly for the younger members of the audience.

The programme was composed of a number of plenary sessions in the large Lumière amphitheater with oral presentations and questions from the audience, all in English. More relaxed periods (coffee breaks, lunch, or the cocktail) were organised in order to allow exchanges and discussions around the 205 scientific posters that were displayed in the Forum 4. This large space also allowed us to welcome 27 exhibitors from private structures or public organisations. In total, no fewer than 52 sponsors and partners supported us for this first edition, and we thank them deeply.

Three satellite sessions were also proposed by companies (BD BioScience and Affymetrix), as well as by a new Lyonnais structure, the Lyric (Lyon research integrated on cancer), on the theme “Challenges and complexity of personalised medicine”, targeted for the general public. To close the International Symposium, two prizes for the best scientific posters were jointly presented by the CRCL and the EACR (The European Association for Cancer Research) to two young scientists. The organisers also wanted to promote the treasures of Lyon, with a free guided tour for participants who had not visited Lyon, and an unforgettable gala dinner with 250 people at the Abbaye de Collonges Paul Bocuse as an end to the social program.

The Symposium was an exceptional opportunity for exchange and reflection around the greater themes of research in oncology. Following the success of this first edition, other meetings will be organised by the CRCL, most likely in 2015.
The Cancer Vaccine Institute (CVI) held its first Symposium on Immunotherapy on 11th and 12th October, 2013 at the Royal Society in London. 79 participants attended the symposium to hear about the latest research on the interactions between chemotherapy and immunotherapy in the treatment of cancer. Over the two days several key themes were discussed including (a) how chemotherapy alters the immunogenicity of tumours, (b) how chemotherapy and other drugs affect immune cells, (c) how immune suppression can be manipulated by drugs and (d) clinical uses of combination therapies and their outcomes.

Speakers provided clinical evidence that the use of chemotherapy improves objective responses and patient survival when used in combination with a range of immunotherapy platforms. Clinical trial data and in vitro data was presented which indicates that a range of drugs including docetaxel, platins, zometa, bortezomib and rapamycin can have positive effects on the immune system in the context of cancer. Moreover drugs such as cyclophosphamide and sunitinib can alter the regulatory balance of the immune system in favour of an anti-tumour response.

One session devoted to the effect of chemotherapeutics on tumour antigenicity/immunogenicity demonstrated how altered immune-receptor expression, induced by drugs such as gemcitabine, decitabine and docetaxel, can increase susceptibility of tumours to immune effector cells. Several speakers reported on the capacity of some drugs to increase T cell migration into tumours and to alter their regulatory environment.

The core message of the symposium is that timing of chemotherapy and immunotherapy is critical and should be driven by an understanding of the underlying immunology. Many drugs that are used at high doses in standard chemotherapy regimens appear to have effects on the immune system at lower doses. Taken together this data is supportive of continued research to understand the effects of chemotherapy on the immune system in order to design rational approaches to combining drugs and immunotherapy.

Scientific organising committee; Prof Angus Dalgleish, Dr John Copier, Prof Lindy Durrant and Prof Graham Pawlec. The organisers would like to thank the EACR who funded one speaker, Prof Frederico Garrido, to attend the meeting. They also supported a prize of £150 for the best poster which was judged by Professors Garrido and Pawlec.

The winner, chosen on the basis of clarity and content from among 21 posters, was Ruhcha V Sutavani from the University of Nottingham with her poster entitled “IL-10 production by a novel population if naïve CD4+ T cells”.

The Cancer Vaccine Institute plans to run further themed two-day meetings in the future.
16th International Workshop on Ataxia telangiectasia (A-T) and ATM - ATW2013

University of Birmingham, UK
28-31 July 2013

The first International Workshop on Ataxia Telangiectasia was held in the UK in 1980 and the 6th also in Birmingham in 1994. Other previous meetings have been held in Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan and Australia.

Ataxia telangiectasia (A-T) is a complex disorder that impacts in a multi-system manner. A-T patients develop progressive cerebellar ataxia, immunodeficiency, pulmonary disease, telangiectasia and cancer predisposition. ATM, the gene mutated in ataxia telangiectasia encodes a protein kinase, which lies at the heart of the cellular response to DNA double strand breaks including those caused by ionising radiation and so has a much wider impact than just its role in the development of A-T.

It has been recognised that ATM plays an important role in chromatin modifications during the response to DNA damage and that Purkinje cells, characteristically lost in A-T patients, have a requirement for an open chromatin configuration. Although the mouse has limitations for studying the consequences of loss of ATM since they do not show progressive cerebellar ataxia there are abnormalities in the Purkinje cell layer of ATM-/- mice, which can be exploited to gain insight into the role played by ATM. There is good evidence that A-T cell lines exist in a state of oxidative stress and that some aspects of A-T as a disorder could be a consequence of elevated oxidative stress.

An important question is whether ATM can be activated through mechanisms not involving double stand breaks. However, there is increasing evidence that loss of ATM has consequences beyond an inability to mount an efficient DNA damage response, including on developmental processes. With regard to A-T patients our understanding of the basis underlying the progressive neurodegeneration in A-T has increased in recent years. Current imaging techniques are also providing insight into abnormalities in the ATM brain. Further, we are now in a position to grow neural stem cells in culture allowing the role of ATM to be dissected in cell culture models.

An important goal of the meeting was to integrate clinical and basic research and to gain an interface between clinical and basic scientists. Our aim was to enhance this area of communication. Speakers at the conference of International renown included Professors Steve Jackson, Yossi Shiloh, Penny Jeggo, Peter McKinnon, Tom Crawford, Oscar Fernandez-Capetillo, Pat Concannon, Shan Zha, Barry Sleckman, Susan Lees Miller, Tej Pandita, Markus Lobrich, Richard Gatti, Domenico Delia, Luciana Chessa, Keith Caldecott, Manuel Stucki, Vincenzo Costanzo, Mike Kastan, Ester Hammond, Karl Herrup, Corry Weemaes, Tanja Stankovic and Malcolm Taylor. In total there were over 50 speakers in attendance at the workshop.

The number of participants was 120 and 36 posters were presented. Sessions included Neuodegeneration in A-T, Cancer in Ataxia telangiectasia and the role of ATM loss in sporadic tumours, Immunodeficiency in A-T, DNA damage signalling and cancer, Treatment; therapy and stem cell potential, A-T related disorders and proteins, Emerging functions of ATM. EACR sponsorship enabled us to sponsor several speakers.
I was awarded an EACR Student bursary to attend the 2013 NCRI Cancer Conference, held in Liverpool in November 2013. Being awarded a bursary was the only way that I was able to attend the NCRI Cancer Conference. As a PhD student, I think it is vital that I present my research at international conferences, and gain feedback from professionals in my field. The NCRI was a great conference, not only because it was very relevant for my research but also because the participants were some of the best in the field of cancer biology.

The conference got off to a great start on Sunday. The plenary lectures addressed current questions in the popular signalling pathways in Cancer, and the problems involved in cervical cancer and its avoidance. I enjoyed these lectures as part of my research involves the RAS signalling pathway, and some of the questions addressed were ones I have also been struggling with. Sitting in a Richard Marais lecture was definitely worth it all.

On Monday, I had my poster presentation. I was lucky enough to have my poster right next to one that addressed the second part of my current research. It was either a great coincidence, or that the NCRI team knew what they were doing. I believe it was the latter. I really appreciated the conversation, as well as some insight into what I should expect as I begin this vital part of my research.

The first cancer cell and model systems proffered paper session was also on Monday. These talks were short and precise. I found all of them interesting, particularly Chris Bakal’s talk on “signalling networks regulating cell shape”. Their research was well deserving of the award they received. We have been focusing on cell shape in metastasis for a few years, and these talks were certainly worth attending.

Tuesday was the continuation of the poster sessions, and I have to commend the participants on the posters they presented. Most of the people I met were PhD students, and their research was indeed of a high standard. I met a few people who were having some of the problems that I was having, and we discussed reasons and solutions. It was a great atmosphere. The second cancer cell and model systems proffered paper session was also on Tuesday. As with the first one, I found these very current and relevant to the field of cancer biology. They addressed signalling pathways that are usually involved in most cancers, and Nil Ege’s lecture on “signalling pathways required for Normal Fibroblast (NF) to Cancer-Associated Fibroblast (CAF) conversion” was thought provoking. I am currently working on CAF effects on cancer cell invasion, and they highlighted some of the pathways I have found to be involved in invasion. This talk was one of the highlights of Tuesday’s programme.

One of the many highlights for me was to meet the EACR team. It was an opportunity to introduce myself as an EACR bursary winner and to thank them for their generosity. Another highlight was the conference dinner, which was nothing short of spectacular. The food, the entertainment and the company were all 5 star.

The final day of the conference was equally as interesting; the lectures on cell migration in tumours educated me a lot on the topic, even areas that I thought I knew.

I would like to thank you for this great opportunity, and an excellent conference, which has taught me a lot about cancer, and its various aspects. This conference is worth attending again and definitely worth recommending.

Njainday Jobe
Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

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