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 AWARDEE REPORT FORM

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| NAME | Martyna Stasiewicz` |
| TWITTER HANDLE\* *optional* | MartynawithaY |
| UNIVERSITY | Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland |
| NAME OF AWARD | Symington Bequest Award |
| PURPOSE OF AWARD *conference/event attended/organised (full name) with city and dates.* |
| European Society for Biomaterials (ESB) 2023 in Davos, Switzerland. September 4th – 8th |
| REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits? |
| I expected to meet new people studying gene delivery using non-viral approaches and those studying the brain and/or the spinal cord. Meeting researchers in similar research areas is not only directly beneficial for my research, but it also helps to expand my overall knowledge of the field. I hoped to receive constructive feedback on my presentation that will help better shape the final few experiments of my PhD project.  |
| COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar/ event. |
| The conference provided a wealth of talks and seminars covering a vast number of topics. There were several different sessions of talks every day, with a plenary talk starting off the conference each day. Many parallel sessions (6 sessions) meant I was able to attend a variety of talks on various topics. The conference provided a wealth of talks and seminars covering a variety of topics. The two poster sessions over the week were extensive and covered everything from biomaterials and engineering to nanotechnology and drug delivery. I met a number of researchers working within the neuroscience area, studying astrocytes and/or neurons, cells I study as part of my project. Many talks I attended focused on nanoparticle delivery of nucleic material to different cell types using various biomaterials. Most interestingly, I came across researchers working on developing cell-specific gene-delivery by modifying nanoparticle structures using various methods. This work is very exciting and relevant, as cell-specific targeting in the central nervous system is an important consideration for developing therapeutics. I am in contact with researchers I met and enquiring about possible collaborations that would hugely benefit my work and the work of our lab. Additionally, I met researchers studying astrocyte behaviour in response to changes in mechanical properties within 3D environments, which I found extremely interesting due to its relevance to my project. Their work will help inform and better understand the behaviour of the astrocytes I work with. I also spoke to researchers from Portugal who work on developing hydrogels for nerve repair using amniotic membranes and who are hoping to expand their research into other human tissues, which is an extremely interesting and unique approach and I am looking forward to discussing it with my team. My presentation on the 4th day of the conference was very well received and I received some thought-provoking questions that will help shape my thesis writing in the next 6 months. |
| REPORT: In relation to skills, what were the most important things you gained? *(does not apply to equipment grant.* For public engagement/outreach awards what did your audience gain and how did you evaluate success? |
| This conference was very well attended by young researchers from all over Europe but also from distant regions such as Australia and Korea. Being surrounded by so many researchers at a similar stage of their PhD careers gave me the confidence to network and discuss my research. I have learned a huge amount about my area of research and other research areas as a result of networking in between sessions, during poster sessions, on breaks and on social events during the week. Additionally, experienced colleagues from my lab who were also in attendance helped me to improve on how I network. Being able to present my research at this meeting was a huge benefit for my presentation skills and I received a lot of good feedback and interest in my work in the lead up to it and afterwards.  |
| REPORT: How do you think you will put this learning experience into practice in the future? For public engagement/outreach awards how with the materials/knowledge generated by this activity be used in the future? |
| I have certainly learned how to make connections with people from various backgrounds and at different levels of their research which will be hugely beneficial for my scientific career going forward. Through talking with various industry exhibitors, I gained connections and insights that will help me in future employment. I learned what industry and academia positions look for in a potential employee and will use this knowledge upon finishing my PhD in my search and preparation for a post-PhD position. |
| Data Protection/GDPR: I consent to the data included in this submission being collected, processed and stored by the Anatomical Society. Answer YES or NO in the Box below |
| Yes |
| Graphical Images: If you include graphical images you must obtain consent from people appearing in any photos and confirm that you have consent. A consent statement from you must accompany each report if relevant. A short narrative should accompany the image. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below |
| YES |
| Copyright: If you submit images you must either own the copyright to the image or have gained the explicit permission of the copyright holder for the image to be submitted as part of the report for upload to the Society’s website, Newsletter, social media and so forth. A copyright statement must accompany each report if relevant. Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below |
| YES |
| SIGNATURE | Martyna Stasiewicz | DATE | 09/09/2023 |

*If submitted electronically, a type-written name is acceptable in place of a hand-written signature*

*File: AS-Award-Report-Form-220922 – International Conference*