

ASCEPT Return Report for Vanessa Brait

Firstly, I would like to thank ASCEPT for granting me an International Travel Award, giving me the opportunity to attend and present my data at the XXVth International Symposium on Cerebral Blood Flow, Metabolism and Function & Xth International Conference on Quantification of Brain Function with PET (Brain & BrainPET '11) in Barcelona, Spain, from the 25th to 28th May, 2011.

Attendance of this internationally renowned conference was of immense benefit to my research career. The scientific program comprised of plenary lectures, symposia, oral and poster presentations and educational workshops focusing on recent advances and methods in stroke research, as well as research in neurodegenerative disorders and traumatic brain injury. I attended an educational seminar on stem cell research and neurogenesis after ischemic stroke, which I found to be especially informative. It was great to see some of the top stroke researchers from around the world present on their current research, and it gave me the opportunity to see where the field is heading and where they believe it needs to be heading. For example, in the last couple of years, a lot of focus has been placed on the attenuation of inflammation following ischemic stroke, as inflammation is well established to contribute to post-ischemic injury. This remains an important focus of ischemic stroke research, however, work from Michael Chopp's laboratory in Detroit, USA, suggests that we should perhaps shift our focus to the intact brain rather than the infarcted/damaged areas of the brain, in order to encourage formation of new synapses to compensate for the damage, which I found to be a very interesting concept.

During this conference I also had the opportunity to present my most recent research findings in the form of an oral presentation in the Cerebral Ischemia (II) session. This represented an excellent opportunity to have my research critically evaluated by the international scientific community and I received a lot of interest from the audience. Moreover, I believe such an opportunity has considerably enhanced my international profile.

Furthermore, I was also able to visit a laboratory in Barcelona, in order to set up an overseas post-doctoral position for next year.

Therefore, attendance of this conference has significantly advanced my current understanding of the recent advances and breakthroughs in the field, and I feel better placed to perform cutting edge stroke research.