

ASCEPT TRAVEL GRANT REPORT

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With the generous assistance of an *ASCEPT New Investigator Travel Award*, I was able to attend and present at the recent 75th Anniversary Meeting of the British Pharmacological Society (18-21 December, 2006) in Oxford, United Kingdom. The meeting was held at the University of Oxford, the oldest university in the English-speaking world, boasting claim to nine centuries of continuous existence. The breathtaking architecture and eerie presence of days gone past was the perfect setting for the 75th Anniversary Meeting of one of the most well established pharmacological societies in the world.

The meeting attracted many internationally renowned researchers and the symposiums I attended were diverse and stimulating. My current research focuses on the influence of gender on the novel enzyme system, NADPH-oxidase, in the cerebral circulation, and the development of cerebrovascular disease. Not surprisingly the Wednesday morning symposium titled 'Battle of the sexes: the influence of gender on cardiovascular disease' was one of the highlights of the conference for me. The symposium hosted a number of internationally acclaimed scientists, such as Professor Sue Duckles, a leader and competitor in the 'gender cerebral' field. Professor Duckles presented a jam-packed and exciting presentation discussing the influence of the female sex hormone, estrogen, on the generation of reactive oxygen species by mitochondria within the cerebral circulation. As you can imagine it provided me with lots of good ideas for my future research. Another fantastic presentation was given by Dr. Ramona Scotland, a young scientist from University College London. Dr. Scotland presented an elegant paper discussing the influence of endothelium-derived hyperpolarizing factor on gender differences in cardiovascular risk. The symposium evoked in-depth discussion from the audience and not surprisingly stirred up my passion for this area of research. Following this symposium it was my turn to get up on the podium to take part in the *Trends in Pharmacological Sciences* Young Pharmacologist of the Year competition. My fifteen-minute presentation followed five other young scientists from the United Kingdom and was entitled "Gender influences the activity, function and expression of NADPH-oxidase in the cerebral circulation". It was an immense honour and pleasure (albeit a little nerve-racking!!) for me to participate in this prestigious competition, and to share my research with an international audience. Question presentation proved to very fruitful and provided me with some good feedback and ideas for the future direction of my research. In the evening I attended the conference dinner where I had the opportunity to meet other participants in an informal setting. The highlight of this evening was when I was awarded first place in the Young Pharmacologist of the Year competition by Humphrey Rang.

Overall, I am immensely grateful to ASCEPT for providing myself with a Travel Grant to attend this conference and of course to take part in the Young Pharmacologist of the Year competition. It has given me the opportunity to further my international exposure, have my own research critically evaluated by the international scientific community and has provided me with plenty of new ideas for my future research. Thank you!