

To the ASCEPT Committee

I would like to thank and extend my gratitude towards ASCEPT for financially assisting me to attend my very first pharmacology meeting. It was a very productive eye opening experience that has forged new local and international scientific relationships during the final stages of my PhD studies and transition into an early independent scientific career.

The IUPHAR Opening Ceremony was one to remember; particularly for the Chinese postgraduate student volunteers that had to sing the finale! (see evidence below)

Given the large number of conference attendees (~ 3000 participants) at IUPHAR, this provided a rich environment for young scientists like myself to exchange and meet other pharmacologists from similar areas of expertise. However, the poster sessions were a little disappointing, as they were not well attended. I thought IUPHAR provided a wide variety of sessions that covered both practical and theoretical insights on vascular biology and pharmacology. I particularly enjoyed attending the first symposium on Scientific Innovation in Future Drug Discovery and Development where radio-telemetry and new imaging techniques and markers in vascular biology were discussed. The seminars given by Katusic on the use of endothelial progenitor cells to correct endothelial dysfunction, Shimokawa on Rho-kinase in the cardiovascular system, the Danish Lecture on Hypertension by Mulvany, the recently published paper on the triple nitric oxide synthase knockout mouse presented by Masato were all very interesting. I even had time to attend others sessions outside of my field, one of the most curious was the use of acupuncture to treat opioid addiction in rats! Apparently the frequency (of electrical stimulation) and not the accuracy of the pressure point is more importance. A fellow colleague with whom I attended the meeting became violently ill due to food poisoning and was admitted to hospital. Perhaps this could explain the lack of attendance by many participants later during the week and why at many symposiums the chair- persons did not turn up!

Aside from the meeting, being in Beijing was an experience in itself. Luckily we spent an extra week in China to go sightseeing. The Great Wall of China was awesome as was the Forbidden City, Summer Palace, Terracotta warriors, Suzhou canals and Shanghai city. By co-incidence, we even got to meet Australian chef, Kylie Kwong in a dumpling Restaurant in Xi'an! Also not to forget, the Night Markets, which sold everything from starfish, snakes, scorpions to drinks with dry ice!

Despite at the adventures away from home, it is nice to be back in Melbourne. As a new member ASCEPT, I am looking forward to attending the ASCEPT meeting later this year.

Kind Regards,

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Nicola Smith and Ngan Huynh at IUPHAR 2006



Chinese Postgraduate Student Volunteers in the Opening Ceremony finale