

# ASCEPT - IUPHAR 2006 TRAVEL GRANT REPORT

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The 15<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Pharmacology, IUPHAR 2006, was opened with style when the Chinese Culture Performance, including Beijing opera and acrobatics, welcomed us to China and the conference.

The scientific program was diverse, and included many seminars that were applicable to my area in natural product research. Seminars on drug metabolism, traditional medicines and drug development were particularly relevant, whilst others on cytochrome P450, predicting pharmacokinetics and quality control for natural products were quite interesting. Outside of my field, the most interesting seminar I attended was on the pharmacological implications of muscle-derived cytokines, where we learnt that fitness is more important than fatness. Overall, the conference offered a chance to hear about the progress of international research, and helped to put my own work into perspective.

The poster sessions allowed me to meet many students and academic staff who were interested in pharmacokinetic studies and natural product research. While the midday viewing sessions were not well attended because most people left for lunch, a lot of people perused the posters in the morning before the seminars began. Several people took photos of my poster, and I was able to discuss possible future directions and develop some contacts, which was particularly beneficial.

Manning the ASCEPT – SEAWP booth allowed me to meet other Australian researchers. It was also fun to attract people to the booth by showing off the cute wares of kangaroos and koalas, and tell them about the upcoming meeting in 2007.

The opportunity to visit an international city was also very beneficial. Beijing is gearing up for the Olympics and is a rapidly evolving city with so much history. It has many magnificent tourist attractions, which I was lucky enough to see after the conference. The sheer scale of the Great Wall, Forbidden City and Terracotta Warriors was mind-blowing and somewhat humbling. The language barrier proved to be not much of a barrier at all, and the cultural experience of this trip was unforgettable.

To conclude, I would like to express my gratitude to the ASCEPT council members for awarding this travel grant. Without their financial help, I would not have been able to attend the 2006 IUPHAR conference. It was a great opportunity to meet with new people and exchange ideas while enjoying a foreign country. As my first international conference, I really enjoyed the whole experience and look forward to attending more in the future.