

Dr Snezana Kusljic  
Department of Pharmaceutical Biology  
Victorian College of Pharmacy  
Monash University

My trip to Japan (attending the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Society for Autonomic Neuroscience) commenced with my arrival in Tokyo on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2007. Thursday October 4<sup>th</sup> allowed me to spend the day visiting Tokyo Tower and the famous shopping district Ginza as well as organising my train trip to Kyoto. On Friday October 5<sup>th</sup> I took the bullet train (Shin-kan-sen) to Kyoto. The same evening I went to conference hall (Kyoto Terrsa) to register and together with my colleagues attended Welcome Reception.

The next day October 6<sup>th</sup> was spent attending a Symposia and Oral sessions on neural control of gastrointestinal system (GIT). Given that a major interest in our laboratory is the characterisation of the electrical activity underlying prostate myogenic properties in the guinea-pig, it was good to see the effect of electrical stimulation of GIT smooth muscle on membrane potential and intracellular  $[Ca^{2+}]$ . The same evening was spent presenting my poster entitled 'Distribution of interstitial cells and connexin 43 in guinea-pig prostate gland' I discussed my research findings with researches from Belgium and Germany and received a very positive feedback. Considering that there is no much literature on the role of prostatic interstitial cells in prostate diseases, my talk led to a number of helpful conversations in the context of differences in the layout of prostatic interstitial cells and their communication proteins in gastrointestinal system, urinary bladder and prostate.

The following day October 7<sup>th</sup> was spent attending a Seminars and Oral sessions during the day and poster session in the evening. Oral session entitled "Basic neuroscience" was probably the highlight of the Conference incorporating presentations with pharmacological and physiological aspects. The topics ranged from use of  $Ca^{2+}$  imaging for studying purinergic P2 receptors in satellite glial cells to brain localisation and changes in expression of novel oestrogen receptor GPR 30 during rat oestrous cycle and spontaneous activity in the prostate gland.

On October 8<sup>th</sup> I enjoyed Keynote Lecture by Dr Janet R. Keast (Australia) on the trophic effects in the pelvic autonomic nervous system. During the lecture, Dr Keast focussed on the role of androgens and the glial cell-line derived neurotrophic factor in injury and the development of pro-regenerative therapies. The same afternoon provided some welcome free time and allowed me to spend the day visiting the Nijo Castle and Kyomizu-dera temple in Kyoto.

On October 9<sup>th</sup> I caught a train back to Tokyo where I had spent a couple of days sightseeing before returning to Australia. I am very grateful to ASCEPT for financial support that allowed me to attend ISAN 2007 in Kyoto (ASCEPT support acknowledged on poster). The opportunity to meet new scientific colleagues and discuss future and ongoing research directions was extremely worthwhile.