

Travel report for Graduate Women In Science (GWIS)

I would like to thank Graduate Women in Science for giving me the opportunity to attend the annual American Association of Immunologist (AAI) conference in Seattle WA from May 13-17th, 2016. The travel grant awarded to me made it possible for me to interact learn from as well as share my expertise in immunology with others. My poster, entitled "Impact of hypoxia on IFN γ -dependent responses: implications on radiotherapy and anti-tumor immunity" was well-received, and I got some interesting feedback and ideas that I am excited to pursue. One of the most interesting symposiums that I attended was organized by the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC). Talks focused on various ongoing checkpoint-inhibitor immunotherapy trials for the treatment of different types of cancers and the challenges researchers had to overcome during the trials. Checkpoint-inhibitor therapies have revolutionized the field of cancer treatment. However they are not successful in all the patients. Talks included discussions about pre-screening processes and how to combine treatments with other conventional anti-tumor therapies to obtain an enhanced response. There were also discussions on chimeric antigen-receptor therapy (CART), which is a way to genetically engineer T cells to make them more efficient in their ability to specifically recognize and kill tumor cells.

Apart from the scientific talks, I was also able attend career development sessions that highlighted ways to get the most out of a post-doctoral fellowship and also how to transition into an industry job. Another career development workshop, which I really enjoyed, included a panel discussion with scientists employed in a variety of positions such as laboratory research and regulatory affairs in industry. Panelists discussed their career paths and skills required to succeed in their respective fields.

To conclude, I am very grateful to GWIS for its support, making my experience a memorable one especially considering that this is the first national conference that I have attended.