**Travel & Conference Bursary 2012 to attend THE ECTS 2012, 39TH ANNUAL CONGRESS**

**Nuor Jamil (University of Edinburgh, Scotland)**

**THE ECTS 2012, 39TH ANNUAL CONGRESS** was held at Stockholm, Sweden from 19-23th May 2012. This annual meeting was organised by the European calcified Tissue Society (ECTS), a major organisation in Europe for researchers and clinicians working in the field of the calcified tissue and related topics. In this year's meeting, there was a clinical update session in the first day, where researchers and clinicians discussed the advancements in the management of osteoporosis and chronic kidney diseases and bone. The meeting was attend by over 500 delegates from different institutions, where there was an excellent environment for presenting and discussing researches in the field of calcified bone and related tissues, risk factors of different bone diseases and the new treatment and prevention strategies.

In this year's meeting, over 600 abstracts, accepted either for oral, poster presentations or both, were discussed. In these abstracts, a variety of themes were approached in the field of bone and cartilage research. The bone topics presented were: osteoblasts differentiation, rare bone diseases, the causes, risk factors, lifestyles and management of osteoporosis, the role of skeletal development in cancer and paediatrics bone diseases. The role of chondrocyte and cartilage biology in the development of arthritis was approached. There were very useful poster sessions, called "translational and clinical", where the new therapeutic targets for the treatment of bone and cartilage diseases were highlighted, with studies focused on studying and finding relevant risk factors for these diseases and their preventive strategies. In addition there were 7 symposia, one in the morning and one in the afternoon each day. They covered a diverse topics related to the bone: ATP and the bone, mineralisation, RANKL mechanism in the bone, proton pump inhibitors and the bone, Nitric oxide and the bone, the bone senescence and the impact of osteoporosis management on the mortality rate.

The" meeting with the professor" was the most interesting part, where there was a small group discussion between the researchers about the most recent papers in that field and the future prospects. "Learning from GWAS studies and what to do next" was one of these meetings. Professor Stuart Ralston, from University of Edinburgh, highlighted the importance and the drawbacks of the GWAS studies in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of Paget's disease and other bone disorders. He also explained the possible role of GWAS studies in arthritis research especially in osteoarthritis. Another session was presented by Professor Hanford form University of Manchester talked about" the cellular mechanism underlying the development of osteoarthritis". Professor Hanford explained the evolutionary process of understanding the cellular mechanism underlying the development of osteoarthritis and focused on the role of DAMTS 4 and 5, together with Runx-2 and SOX-9 in OA. He also mentioned some of the new emerging genes and their role in this process.

Workshops were also included in this meeting programme. The new methodologies in bone research, NFKB signalling, the treatment of rare bone diseases and the role of vitamin D in the development of non skeletal disease were the topics covered. Professor Handford explained the role of protein processing, haemostasis in the pathogenesis of cartilage diseases. There were few learning outcomes 1: The process of endochondral ossification, 2: The nature of ER stress and the resultant unfolded protein response and 3: The mechanisms by which mutations in extracellular matrix macromolecules can cause disease.

ECTS meeting was a very useful and interesting meeting, particularly for researchers as well as clinicians working in the field of bone and cartilage. The topic discussed was approached at different views, which resulted in a thorough understanding of the disease mechanisms and management of bone and cartilage diseases. The next meeting will held at Lisbon, Portugal in May 2013, , which is really recommended to attend.