

Travel Grant Report

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**Conference attended: American College of Veterinary Pathologists Conference 1-5
December 2012**

I am very grateful for the support of the Pathological Society which enabled me to attend the American College of Veterinary Pathologists (ACVP) Conference. The meeting contributed enormously to my development as an early stage researcher and diagnostic veterinary pathologist. This report outlines the key benefits to me resulting from my attendance at the ACVP conference:

1. Poster Presentation: As a conference delegate, I presented a poster entitled “Expression of cathepsin B in spontaneous canine, equine and murine mammary tumours”. I was consequently able to discuss my data with a large number of veterinary pathologists working at both academic institutes and commercial diagnostic laboratories. This led to insightful discussions and interesting suggestions for further project development. I hope to publish this work later in 2013 and feel confident that the feedback I received from the meeting will have a direct and positive impact on the quality of the resulting manuscript.

2. Opportunity to attend presentations by prominent veterinary pathologists and eminent plenary speakers: The conference program incorporated a ‘Pillars of Pathology’ Mini-Symposium including presentations from Profs John King, Donald Meuten, Mary Anna Thrall and Stephen Barthold. This constituted an excellent opportunity to hear inspirational talks given by eminent veterinary pathologists whose presentations incorporated description of their key discoveries, together with insights into career development and structure. The Joint Plenary Session was focussed on Allergic Airway Disease and included talks by several eminent scientists in this field including Prof Clare Lloyd (Imperial College) and Prof Stephen Galli (Stanford School of Medicine). Presentations in this session included description of cutting-edge discoveries in the field of mast cell biology and Th2 responses, both of which have relevance to my current postdoctoral studies involving the inflammatory environment of the mammary gland during involution post weaning.

3. Continuing professional development: The conference program included evening “mystery slide” sessions focussing on neuropathology and hepatic disorders. These sessions, and the accompanying electronic personal study resources, were a valuable personal study aid. In addition, the ACVP Gross and Microscopic Examination slide review was attended.

4. Natural disease scientific sessions: These sessions, which incorporated a combination of short talks and invited speakers, provided a wealth of information regarding natural disease pathogenesis and diagnosis. Topics were diverse and covered all species groups. Of particular interest were reports of diseases not currently observed, or uncommonly observed in the UK, such as tularaemia, and reports of diseases in exotic species which are increasing in prominence in the UK in the workload of diagnostic veterinary pathologists.

5. Networking opportunities: Over the course of the meeting, there were excellent opportunities for networking with other veterinary pathologists working in both academic positions and commercial and industrial environments.

6. Post meeting workshop on immunohistochemistry in canine and feline cancer diagnosis and prognosis: The post meeting workshop provided cutting-edge opinion on optimal immunohistochemical panels for diagnosis of small animal tumours. This was invaluable as a large amount of data was presented in an intense session and the accompanying electronic resources will provide a useful reference.

In summary, my attendance at the ACVP conference was a scientifically and professionally enriching experience and I am very grateful to the Pathological Society for awarding me a Travel Grant to facilitate my attendance.