

Susann Rahmig, PhD
Leibniz-Institut für Alternsforschung – Fritz-Lipmann-Institut e.V.
Jena, Germany

Jena, October 2019

Meeting Report – 48th Annual Scientific Meeting of ISEH, Brisbane, Australia

This year, the Annual conference of the International Society of Experimental Hematology (ISEH) took place in Brisbane, Australia, from August 22nd to 25th in the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Center. Like every year, many of the world's leading scientists in basic and clinical hematology and even more young investigators came together to discuss advances and burning questions in the field. Due to the far-off location of this year's meeting, the attendance of the conference was a little lower than in previous years. However, it was great to see a lot of scientists from Asia-Pacific who attend the meetings in Europe or the United States only infrequently.

The conference featured around 70 talks spanning the field from developmental hematopoiesis to new approaches in leukemia therapy. A highly covered topic was the microenvironment and how it changes during aging or disease. Several single cell sequencing approaches of bone marrow stromal cells have been published during the last year and led to a better understanding of the cellular composition of the bone marrow niche. Now researchers are using this data to delineate the specific functions of specific niche cell subsets and their role in regulating HSCs and progenitors. David Scadden, who received this year's Donald Metcalf Award, for example, showed that osteocalcin⁺ cells are involved in the maintenance of common lymphoid progenitors (CLPs) via notch signaling and that those cells are reduced during stress and aging, conditions associated with a reduction in T cell function.

Another highly discussed study was the *ex vivo* HSC expansion protocol by the Wilkinson lab. Some labs were already able to adapt the protocol to their needs and generated data using *ex vivo* expanded mouse HSCs, other scientists were still in the process of establishing the protocol in their labs.

Apart from the talks, I very much enjoyed the 'Meet the Expert Mixer' which gives PhD students and postdocs the opportunity to discuss science and career related topics with highly established PIs. I had the great chance to encounter David Scadden, Sean Morrison and Hanna Mikkola during the 'Meet the Expert Mixer' who shared their opinions on how they select postdoc candidates, how to choose a good project and how to find one's own niche in the science community.

A new interesting feature this year was the opportunity for PhD students and postdocs to indicate on their name batches if they were looking for a new job or for PIs if they were looking for new people. I tried this new offer and had a couple of interesting encounters with PIs, I hadn't met before personally.

During my poster presentation I was able to introduce our humanized mouse model in detail to new groups, potentially resulting in new collaboration. Also, I got some valuable input from Prof. Sean Morrison who took time to discuss my data and future directions of my project.

Overall, attending the ISEH annual conference was a great experience for me and I would fully recommend it to young researchers in a hematology related research field. I could engage in scientific and career related discussions with fellow researchers at different stages of their career, which was very insightful and encouraged me in my future career plans. Thus, I am very thankful to the GSCN for enabling me to participate in this conference by supporting me with a travel grant.