Australian Neurotrauma Symposium Meeting, Hobart, 2\textsuperscript{nd}-3\textsuperscript{rd} December 2016
Australasian Neuroscience Society Annual Conference, Hobart 4\textsuperscript{th} – 7\textsuperscript{th} December, 2016

This year the Australian Neurotrauma Symposium was held in Hobart as a satellite meeting to the Australasian Neuroscience Society (ANS) Annual conference. The Neurotrauma meeting was hosted by the wonderful local organising committee from The University of Tasmania. This was a fantastic meeting attended by both local and international guests from varied backgrounds ranging from basic science to clinical research. I was thrilled to be invited to present my research at this year’s Neurotrauma meeting. The Neurotrauma symposium is unique in that it provides a fantastic opportunity to not just present recent research but receive supportive criticism and advice from those within the field. Accordingly, I chose to present our most recent research establishing a large animal model of spinal cord injury, the first in Australia. The motivation for the development of such a model stems from the notion that spinal cord injury (SCI) researchers predominately utilise rodents for SCI modelling and experimentation. Unfortunately, despite the large number of developed novel treatments for SCI using such rodent models, most have failed to demonstrate efficacy in human clinical trials. Recently, large animal models of SCI have been identified as a valuable intermediary model for preclinical evaluation of promising therapies to aid clinical translation. Both my collaborator and I have prior experience with large animal models of SCI in North America, however no such model currently exists in Australia. We received valuable feedback and insights from members of the Neurotrauma community on ways in which we can improve our model and overcome some of the hurdles we have faced to date. Overall, it was encouraging to receive support and advice from members who voiced their appreciation of the need to establish a large animal model in Australia in order to improve clinical translation.

In addition to the opportunity to present my own research, attendance at the Australian Neurotrauma Symposium enabled me to learn of others exciting research within the field. In particular it was fantastic to hear from Assistant Professor Michael Lane (Drexel University, USA) who presented his research of neuroplasticity following cervical spinal cord injury. During the second day of the symposium I thoroughly enjoyed session 5 which was devoted to tackling translational problems (Translation and clinical trials: hurdles, hype and hope), as this strongly aligns with my own passions in research. A panel of speakers presented an interesting array of issues within the field related to translation from both a basic science and clinical point of view. This enabled important discussions on ways we can improve studies both at the experimental and clinical level. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the satellite meeting and found it to be a great success not just in the research presented, but in the collegial nature of the meeting to strengthen current networks whilst forming new ones.

Whilst the Neurotrauma meeting closed on the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of December, the Australasian Neuroscience Society (ANS) annual meeting opened on Sunday the 4\textsuperscript{th} continuing until Wednesday the 7\textsuperscript{th}. At ANS I presented a poster from my recent post-doctoral training at The University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB), USA entitled “Localisation of the corticospinal tract in pigs: implications for modelling traumatic spinal cord injury to improve translation” which was well received. Generally, ANS provided an extensive range of exciting research within the greater neuroscience field. I enjoyed the presidential symposium, hosted by outgoing president Prof James Vickers, on the topic of “Women in Neuroscience”. Two presenters, Dr Frances Corrigan and Dr Jee Hyun Kim, gave impressive presentations of their work and achievements to date. As a fellow female neuroscientists I appreciated the opportunity to hear from these two impressive researchers who provided inspiration and encouragement for all researchers who attended.

I thank the Spinal Cord Injury Network for the award of this travel grant in memory of Rosalind Nicholson. This grant has enabled me to attend two fantastic scientific conferences, providing the opportunity to present my research, gaining invaluable feedback and importantly strengthening and developing national networks.