

Epithelial Stem Cells and Niches

Gordon Research Conference

23 - 28 August 2026 in Castelldefels, Barcelona, Spain

In August 2026, I had the opportunity to attend my first Gordon Research Conference, located in Castelldefels. The conference brought together researchers in the field of epithelial stem cells and niches, covering the intestine, lungs, hair follicles, skin, and more.

The days were filled with presentations, poster sessions, delicious food, and informal scientific discussions, along with some free time to discover the area. The atmosphere was relaxed and friendly, which encouraged me to talk to many different people. The conference was very well organised, with presentations grouped into thematic sessions such as Immune-Microbe-Epithelial Connections, Interorgan Communication, and Regulators of Stemness and Plasticity. Other sessions covered Evo-Devo and Dev-Bio Perspectives on Stem Cell-Niche Interactions, Technologies for Epithelial Stem Cell Biology, Stem Cells and Cancer, Re/Establishing the Functional Niche, and Epithelial Aging. Among many interesting talks were the presentations of keynote speaker Prisca Liberali, "Scaling Life: How Single Cells Orchestrate Tissue-Level Coordination," and Kim Jensen, "Regulatory Mechanisms Governing Cell State Transitions in the Intestine."

On Monday and Tuesday afternoons, I presented my poster, "Spatial Regulation of Enteroendocrine Cell Differentiation from Intestinal Stem Cells along the Proximal-Distal Gut Axis." My research focuses on how the epigenome of intestinal stem cells (ISCs) and their niche in the intestinal crypt influence ISC cell state and differentiation into distinct subtypes of enteroendocrine cells (EECs). To control for environmental factors, we use intestinal organoids as an in vitro model, which could additionally be used to test the effect of food-derived compounds on hormone production and secretion by enteroendocrine cells. I was happy to see strong interest in my topic from the attendees, which led to engaged discussions on both days.

The conference was a great opportunity to connect with people whom I can contact in the future should I have questions about my research. This experience strengthened my confidence in presenting my work to an international audience. I am very grateful for the support of the BioMed Travel Grant.