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Nikolaos Poulis  
PhD Candidate MTB program

### BioMed Travel Grant report

I had the opportunity to participate at the Heart Valve Society (HVS) annual meeting in Miami, USA, which took place from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2022. I submitted two abstracts based on my current PhD projects, and had the honor to present both of them at the International Conference of Tissue Engineered Heart Valves (ICETHV), a satellite meeting of the HVS.

In the first talk, I presented the characterization of tissue engineered heart valves. In the second talk, I discussed the immunocompatibility assessment of such valves. Attending this conference was a remarkable experience: I obtained the most recent updates in the field of heart valve tissue engineering, I met key opinion leaders and exchanged ideas with them, and, most importantly, I received valuable inputs for my PhD projects. In detail, both my presentations piqued a lot of interest that led to engaging discussions over the topic of tissue engineered matrix characterization and in vitro immunocompatibility assessment. After the tissue engineered heart valve meeting and during the break-out sessions, I had the opportunity to explore talks from leading experts discussing the most recent advances in aortic, pulmonary, tricuspid and mitral valve replacement and repair. This information provided insight on the general future prospects and the directions in the field, which helped to reconsider aspects with regard to the potential clinical translation of my projects. During the networking sessions, I had the chance to talk to the leaders in the field and receive valuable feedback, which not only furthered my understanding on my scientific approaches but also opened the possibilities for future collaborations. Additionally, joining this very active and prestigious scientific community was beneficial in broadening my scientific career horizons.

I was honored to represent University of Zurich and the Life Science Zurich Graduate School in one of the most awaited and attended conferences in the heart valve field. In this conference, I had the opportunity to showcase a portion of the cutting-edge research on cardiovascular tissue engineering that is performed in the Institute for Regenerative Medicine and the University of Zurich. Both projects were selected among the very high level of submitted works and were presented among the works of other leading institutions. By actively contributing to this meeting, I helped portraying the high quality of research within the Life Sciences Graduate School programs. Therefore, I am very grateful to have been awarded the BioMed Travel Grant by the Life Science Zurich Graduate school and the BioMed Ph.D. program. The funding allowed me to attend this very prestigious conference and experience the unique international environment of the Heart Valve Society meeting.