Biomedicine Travel Grant Report

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Conference: 36th European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP) Congress
Place and Date: Barcelona, Spain - October 7-10, 2023

I would like to express my gratitude to the Biomedicine PhD Program for providing me with a Travel Grant in 2023. Due to this great opportunity, I was able to attend to the 36th ECNP Congress from the 7th to the 10th of October, which took place in Barcelona, Spain.

It is always very fruitful to attend to this international congress, which this year, was full of outstanding speakers and interesting lectures. A fascinating talk was the one called "Gut feelings – The microbiota-gut-brain axis as a key regulator of brain and behaviour across the lifespan", presented by Prof. John Cryan, from Ireland. He did not only revisit how the microbiota can influence behavior, but also did so as an amazing storyteller. Other talks mentioned excitatory-inhibitory imbalances as a key mechanism in neurodevelopmental disorders, which encouraged me to pursue for the future plans of my project in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Additionally, it helped me bear in mind the concept that, alterations throughout neurodevelopment are not linear through time and manner, and therefore, was a kind reminder that one has to think outside of the box when it comes to studying neuropsychiatric disorders.

However, the most remarkable to me was the lecture entitled "From stem cells to assembloids and toward buildings human circuits in living systems to study disease", given by Prof. Sergiu Pasça, who has travelled all the way from the United States to speak at this congress. I have always been a huge admirer of Prof. Pasça's work, as he is one of the greatest references in the field of disease modeling using induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs). As an early career scientist working in the same field, it was both an honor and an inspiration for me to hear about his state-of-the-art research with iPSC-derived assembloids.

This year's ECNP Congress have received an impressive number of 1491 abstract across the globe, and I was fortunate to be one of them. It was nice to interact with other neuroscientists from different research areas during the poster sessions, while I was able to present my own poster. It has definitely been a pleasure to receive interdisciplinary feedback about my work. Moreover, seeing incredible young scientists was somehow a motivation for my own academic career.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Biomed PhD Program one more time for giving me the opportunity of participating in this academically rich event. The knowledge I acquired at this ECNP Congress will certainly be helpful not only to my PhD Defense but also as neuroscientist in my future postdoctoral research.