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BioMed Travel Grant Report



I am very grateful for the financial aid I received from the BioMed PhD program, as it made my participation in the Gordon's Research Conference on the Physiology, Biology and Pathology of Phosphate in Galveston, TX, USA possible. This GRC conference is amongst the first of its kind, focusing wholly on phosphate in health and disease. It started with a gentle introduction about phosphate homeostasis followed by dozens of talks dissecting phosphate absorption, bioavailability, and bioaccessibility; renal handling in physiology and pathology; genetic dysregulation encapsulating deficiency and excess; implication in upstream endocrine dysregulation and its clinical sequelae; sensing; and homeostasis in various organisms spanning yeast and plants.

This well-structured and highly-focused conference featuring a plethora of unpublished reports served a vital role in comprehensively updating fellow phosphate researchers on the current state of the field. The talks have not only taught me about many aspects of phosphate physiology and novel techniques I did not know about, but also inspired and motivated me as a researcher in this field.

I was lucky to be given the opportunity to present my doctoral project to the leading experts in the field: my thesis project concerns the implications of dietary phosphate restriction in a mouse model of acute kidney injury. My oral and poster presentations were met with ample helpful feedback and facilitated the starting point for networking with various principal investigators and graduate students. The conference has also endowed me with the knowledge of many possibilities for the future of my project in the technical and conceptual sense as well as my career.

The conference site was also excellent, situated immediately on the Gulf of Mexico in a beautiful hotel; it allowed me to visit a stunning local aquarium as well as the Johnson Space Center in Houston, which played an instrumental role in the Apollo program. I am both indebted and honored for this opportunity to represent the Life Science Zurich Graduate School and the Biomedicine program across the Atlantic.