

『学会見聞記』

Gordon Research Conference (GRC)
“Glycolipid and Sphingolipid Biology”Division of Vascular Molecular physiology,
Graduate School of Medicine, Kanazawa University

Juanjuan Zhao

The 14th GRC on Glycolipid and Sphingolipid Biology was organized from 2016/03/06 to 2016/03/11 at the Renaissance Tuscany Resort in Il Ciocco, a pretty and lovely Italian countryside location far enough from the city to prevent distractions, which provided an ideal environment for scientific discussion. The objective of this conference is to provide a venue and forum for scientists to meet and assess the latest progression in the field of glycolipid/sphingolipid biology. Around 200 researchers with same interests, whether working in the same subject or in interdisciplinary, came together in such a highly-stimulating and non-intimidating environment for a full week of intense discussion of the most cutting-edge aspects of the glycolipid/sphingolipid biology, in which contained one high-quality presentation after another, complemented by robust discussions of important scientific topics day after day. It was truly a unique and interactive experience.

The conference program covered a variety of topics with an emphasis on mechanism of physiological processes where glycolipids/sphingolipids play a prominent role. A number of invited speakers such as Professor Yusuf Hannun from Stony Brook University, Professor Akio Kihara from Hokkaido University, Professor Yoshio Hirabayashi from RIKEN presented their latest work and future challenges in a informal, interactive format, all of which were fantastic and thrilling speech. I asked them some questions and they gave me clear answers, which further broadened my knowledge in this field. How glycolipid/sphingolipid enzymology pathways were regulated and controlled spatially were addressed in the first day. The subsequent topics were that glycolipids/sphingolipids have emerged as critical factors in many physiological events, including apoptosis, autophagy, regulation of metabolism, cell migration, and play a featured role in several diseases, including bacterial and viral infections, type 2 diabetes, multiple inflammatory diseases and cancer. The availability of suitable technology and new developments related to this field was also covered. A large portion of the program was dedicated to understanding the roles of lipids in physiology and the translation of these findings to the clinic. Everyone at the conference was approachable, being comfortable asking questions and sharing information about their own work.

The conference was small and intimate, with opportunities for direct communication and the fertile exchange of ideas at the frontiers of the glycolipid/sphingolipid biology with scientists from the world. I believe I have learned a lot from other researchers of different countries. In the meanwhile, I built informal networks with some peers, which might lead to a lifetime of collaboration and scientific achievement in my future research. Without the wonderful conference, I would be less willing to share unpublished results and would

lose opportunities for forging valuable collaborations. On the other hand, I got acquainted with some experts in this field by discussing with them, and I got some new ideas for my research. To be honest, I have found that the conferences provided a valuable means of disseminating information and ideas in a way that cannot be achieved through the usual channels.

The poster sessions were also an important part of the conference. Posters were displayed in the same room as oral presentation. From 16:30 to 18:00, sufficient discussion time, was provided. My Posters presentation on 8th March and 10th March was deletion of sphingosine 1-phosphate (S1P) receptor-2 (S1P2) inhibits lung fibrosis through altering alveolar macrophage polarization and senescence in mice. This gave me the opportunity to explain the mechanisms and significance of S1P2 during the processes of pulmonary fibrosis. There were some questions and comments from audiences regarding my project. The deepest impression was the question from Professor Holleran, Walter M who came from University of California. He asked me whether I did the experiment about the effect of S1P2 antagonist on lung fibrosis, which was to the essential point. Indeed, I observed that S1P2 antagonist attenuated lung fibrosis (unpublished data in the poster) to further demonstrate my project value that anti-S1P2 probably is a promising target for treatment of lung fibrosis. He also truly appreciated my work by saying a few times congratulations to me with sincere and approving smile.

In the last day of the productive conference, it was announced that my poster was awarded as excellent one among 92. It was such an amazing and exciting news for me! In the evening, I attended the banquet of this conference. At there, I have made more friends with many researchers besides the above mentioned peers during scientific discussion. We had such fond and sweet memories!

Taken together, past attendee say: “GRC is high-quality, cost-effective meetings and have been recognized as the world’s premier scientific conferences.” I found it truly worthy of the reputation until I joined it in person.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the Kato Memorial Bioscience Foundation that had supported me the budget to participate this conference.

