

Biochemical Society Young Embryologist Network Annual Meeting 2023 Post-award Report

The 15th iteration of the Young Embryologist Network's developmental biology meeting took place on 22nd May 2023 at the The Francis Crick Institute in London in a hybrid event. More than 200 delegates from UK universities and across Europe travelled to attend the conference in person and around 100 attendees joined online. As every year the event had a broad scope, integral to which is networking and strengthening collaborative work between early-career-stage researchers (ERCs).

The scientific talks this year emphasised pre- and peri-implantation embryo development, underscoring the commitment to enhance *in vitro* embryo work pertaining to fertility. Two of the invited speakers delivered remarkable presentations on this subject: Professor Katsuhiko Hayashi from Osaka University, Japan commenced the day with an impressive overview of his pioneering research aiming to safeguard the endangered Northern White Rhino, a species with only two remaining females; later, Dr Andrea Pauli from the Institute of Molecular Pathology in Austria presented captivating findings on how closely related species such as zebra- and medaka-fish prevent interspecies fertilisation with the expression of a single protein on the egg!

Ten brilliant short presentations from PhD and junior Postdoc researchers were delivered during the day. The day was also divided into two remarkable poster sessions, held in the morning and afternoon, where around 40 posters were presented by a diverse group of ECRs, including master's students and senior postdocs. The topics covered a wide range, and sparked engaging discussions during the day. It will be thrilling to see the collaborations that emerge from these sessions and how they will shape the trajectory of developmental research in the years to come.

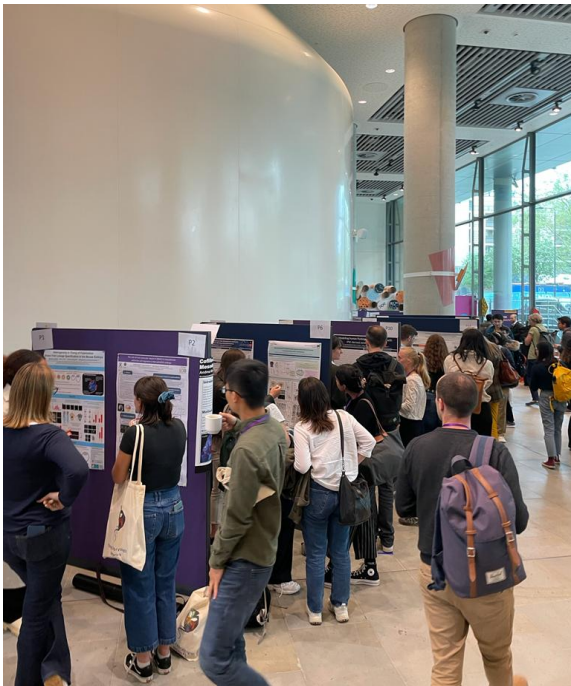
Concluding the series of brief presentations our last guest speakers, Dr Laura Pellegrini from University of Cambridge demonstrated her work in brain research, while Prof Henrik Kaessmann delivered the Sammy Lee Memorial Lecture, and captivated the audience with the fascinating realm of sex chromosomes. The Sammy Lee Memorial Lecture is a tribute established to honour late Dr Sammy's Lee memory and recognize his contributions to developmental biology.

The esteemed 2023 Sammy Lee medal for the Best Short Talk was awarded to Clara Munger, while Ashley Libby earned the runner-up position. In addition, the Best Poster Prize was awarded to Francisco Manuel Martin-Zamora, a PhD student at Queen Mary University and the runner-up prize to Adiyant Lamba, also a PhD student based at the University of Cambridge.

A refreshing addition to the intellectually stimulating day were the scientific perspective sessions. This year's focus centred around Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in science, raising awareness of the significance of embracing EDI in the academic environment. EDI experts Alison Forbes, Head of Inclusion at The Francis Crick Institute, and Dr Rafael Galupa, a social entrepreneur and prospective

group leader at the Centre for Integrative Biology in Toulouse, France, shared their valuable insights on the topic. They shed light on the current state of underrepresentation in science and offered practical strategies to foster inclusivity.

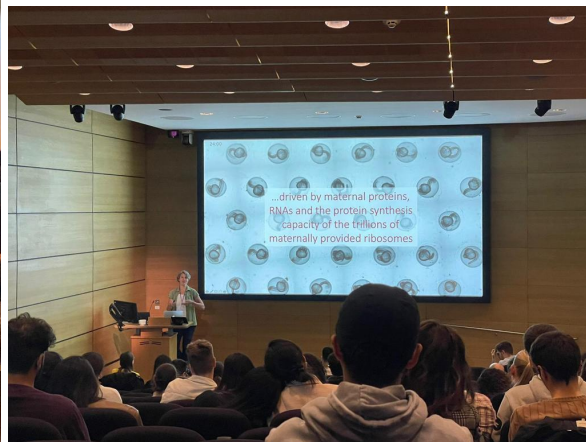
All together, we believe that the YEN events, year after year, are forming a real community between the Crick and partners. We believe that the YEN 2023 Conference was a success and we hope to keep the event free and accessible to everyone in the next years to come.



1. During our poster sessions delegates were discussing their research.



2. YEN committee 2023 and Dr Karen Lee (right bottom corner) founder of ReGen Charity in the memory of late Dr Sammy Lee, and friend and long term supporter of YEN. Names from top left to right, Matyas Bubna-Litic, Jeremie Subrini, Jack Morgan, Olivia Dinwoodie, Christos Kalaitzis, Irina Ballaguer Basells, Chantelle Spiteri, Luca Zanieri, Ferran Garcia Llagostera, Mint Htun, Foteini Papaleonidopoulou, Sergio Menchero, Cláudia Belém and Dr Karen Lee.



3. During the talk of invited speaker Dr Andrea Pauli from the Institute of Molecular Pathology in Austria.



4. EDI experts Alison Forbes, Head of Inclusion at The Francis Crick Institute (in the middle), and Dr Rafael Galupa, a social entrepreneur and prospective group leader at the Centre for Integrative

Biology in Toulouse, France (on the left), shared their valuable insights on this year's scientific perspective panel discussion "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in Science" moderated by Jesus Cantoral Rebordinos YEN committee member (on the right).

Copyright and permission: Foteini Papaleonidopoulou has taken these pictures and given permission to share. Also, people depicted have been asked and given permission.