

Vasculata 2019, Medical College of Wisconsin 15-18th July 2019

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A few months ago, I was given the opportunity to attend Vasculata 2019 at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. This was only possible due to the funding kindly given by the British Microcirculation Society (BMS).

The conference started bright and early at 7:50am on Monday morning (15th July) with the registration and welcome reception. The rest of the morning focused on the lungs with key note speaker, Dr G Ganesh Konduri. A fascinating talk was given on the role of Yes- associated protein (YAP1) in lung vascular and alveolar growth! After a lunch break, we all split up into our groups and headed to our first workshop session. I chose 'manipulating genomes with CRISPR', which involved a lecture and a group activity designing our own experiments using CRISPR. Later that afternoon, the first poster session took place.



Outside the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

Tuesday, was another early start! The sessions focused on the heart and brain followed by another workshop. I chose to attend 'learn what type of skills you need to obtain your ideal job'. This allowed me to reflect on my strengths and weaknesses. More importantly, I was able to make a personal plan of action to build on those weaknesses. In the evening, another poster session took place. I was nervous to present, but this was an opportunity for me to showcase my work to the judges. I discussed my work with the experts who gave me positive comments, feedback and exciting new ideas that could contribute to the final year of my PhD.

On Wednesday, there were two sessions focusing on renal and blood. An exciting talk was given by Professor Sorokin titled 'role of p66Shc in regulation of microvascular reactivity of renal blood vessels'. This was an area I knew little about, but during this talk I learnt a lot about link to the *Shc1* gene. We were then given the chance to go on a boat tour of Downtown Milwaukee and the shoreline of Lake Michigan- it was beautiful watching the sunset on the riverfront! This was followed by a conference dinner and poster prizes were awarded – I was one of the winners!

The concluding remarks were held on Thursday morning. We thanked the organisers for all their hard work and said our goodbyes to our new acquaintances. Then, we headed to the airport for a well-deserved break in New York for a few days!

Overall, this conference was a valuable experience as an early career scientist. I was able to learn about cutting edge research in different fields of cardiovascular medicine and expanded my knowledge in areas I knew little about before arriving! As well as this, I gained two American mentors who are experts in vascular biology. I would like to thank BMS again for their support. It was an invaluable experience and memories that will last forever.