

MONTHLY UPDATE

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

September 2017

Everyone seems to be away at, just returned from, or preparing for, a conference. That is, when they're not setting or proofing exams or winning large MBIE grants. We can't publicise exam contents, but we can tell about the grants that have been awarded and about where people have been going to talk about their research.

Huge congratulations to Peter Dearden, Monica Gerth, and Paul Gardner (who will be joining us in January). Peter has been awarded \$6million from MBIE for the five year research programme "Developing and applying next generation genomic selection to rapidly improve honeybee performance", while he, Monica, and Paul have each won Smart Ideas funding - Monica \$1million for the two year "Mātauranga Māori guided discovery and development of new control methods for Phytophthora", Paul \$939,999 for three years of "Building bioinformatic software for controlling protein expression" and Peter the same amount for "Building Better Biocontrols by switching reproduction in parasitoid wasps". In addition to that, Kurt Krause is an AI on Vernon Ward's Smart Ideas "Targeting unique virus proteins with small molecule inhibitors", and together with Greg Cook, he has been awarded a \$70k NZ Catalyst fund seeding grant to facilitate collaboration with Nobel laureate Prof Hartmut Michel, of the Max Plank institute of Biophysics, Frankfurt, Germany.

It must be just about time for another celebratory afternoon tea.



Bronwyn, for Catherine (in Croatia)

Conferences

Prizes

Congratulations to **Hannah Best**, who won the Goddard prize for best student oral presentation at Australasian Winter Conference on Brain Research (AWCBBR) with her talk on *Therapeutic targeting of autophagy in neurodegenerative Batten disease*.

Hannah also won the OMSRS poster prize at the Division of Health Sciences Spotlight on Child Health Symposium in Wellington.

Overseas conference attendance

Liz Ledgerwood, 8th Joint Meeting of Society for Free Radical Research Australasia and Japan with International Symposium on Coenzyme Q, 9 – 12 December 2017, Tokyo, Japan

Russell Poulter, IX International Symposium on Kiwifruit, 6-9 September, Porto, Portugal

Catherine Day, Ubiquitin and SUMO: From molecular mechanisms to system-wide responses, 15-19 September, Cavtat-Dubrovnik, Croatia

Peter Mace, Gordon Research Conference Posttranslational Modification Networks, 13-18 August, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Kurt Krause, International Union of Crystallography, 21-29 August, Hyderabad, India

New Zealand conferences

Monica Gerth, Dental Implants Conference, 8-9 September, Hamilton, NZ

Stephanie Hughes, Australasian Winter Conference for Brain Research, 2-6 September, Queenstown

QMB & satellites - speakers

Chris M. Brown - Bioinformatic discovery of noncoding RNA genes.

Mitochondria satellite

Rinky Parakra - Relationship between cytochrome c and cardiolipin oxidation is highly dependent upon the experimental conditions

Liz Ledgerwood - Insights into function from naturally occurring cytochrome c mutations

Aziz Aiderus - Insights into the prognostic association of fatty acid oxidation in cancer

Genome Biology satellite

Tony Merriman - The non-coding genome: from genome-wide association study signal to causal variant

Anita Dunbier - Epigenetic regulation of genes associated with breast cancer risk and progression

Mik Black - *In silico* detection of candidate synthetic lethal gene pairs using cancer genomics data

Peter Dearden - Developmental plasticity and its impacts on the genome

Cell Signalling satellite

Parry Guilford - E-Cadherin and cancer

Cell Signalling/Proteins joint session

Catherine Day - Building chains - characterisation of ubiquitin chain assembly by TRAF proteins

Peter Mace - Apoptosis Signal-regulating Kinases—linking redox stress to MAPK signalling

Proteins satellite

Monica Gerth - Scratched, then sniffed? Exploring the role of chemoreceptors in host invasion.

Wayne Patrick - Enzyme evolution: innovation and not much optimization

Jodi Brewster - Insights into the multiple activities of a primordial-like enzyme from *Thermotoga maritima*.

Australasian Winter Conference for Brain Research

Alison Clare - Transcriptome profiling of layer 5 intratelencephalic-projecting neurons in the mature mouse motor cortex

Health & Safety

There will be an IBSC audit in September. The MPI audit went very well. Next IBSC meeting is on the 26th September, cut off for submissions is noon Monday the 18th September.

New arrivals



Dr Nicola Bougen-Zhukov, a new Postdoctoral Fellow working with Parry Guilford.



Dr Anna Gosling, ARF working for Tony Merriman



Oluwatobi (Tobi) Eboda, a PhD student with Steph Hughes



Dr Ei Phyo Khaing is a medical doctor doing a PhD with Julian Eaton-Rye

Visiting student

Alexandre Schneider is a visiting student undertaking an internship as part of his MSc studies (at Institut National Supérieur des Sciences Agronomiques) with Julian Eaton-Rye through until 2 February 2018. No photo available just yet.