**Report on the HAA Annual Scientific Meeting 2016, Melbourne, 13-16 November 2016**

**(The Annual Scientific Meetings of the Haematology Society of Australia and New Zealand, the Australian & New Zealand Society of Blood Transfusion and the Australasian Society of Thrombosis and Haemostasis)**

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I have the privilege of receiving the MSH Education Grant to attend the HAA Annual Scientific Meeting 2016 in Melbourne, Australia. It was a 4-day meeting covering laboratory and clinical haematology as well as transfusion medicine. I am also happy to report that I have an abstract accepted as a poster at the meeting. I also attended the pre-congress haemoglobinopathy symposium held a day before the start of the meeting.

The pre-congress Haemoglobinopathy Education Symposium was the first ever for this meeting. The symposium was held in recognition of the illustrious career of Associate Professor Don Bowden in the field of haemoglobinopathy. A broad range of topics and issues in thalassaemia and haemoglobinopathies, (namely sickle cell anaemia with regards to the haemoglobinopathies) were covered. As always, Professor Vip Viprakasit gave an excellent lecture on thalassaemia. Other topics covered included molecular techniques in haemoglobinopathy diagnosis, management of sickle cell anaemia as well as future directions in haemoglobinopathy management, from newer agents to increase erythropoiesis such ACE-536, of which many of us are also involved in the ongoing clinical trial, to more personalised approach such as gene therapy. Expect exciting times ahead, especially for the management of thalassaemia.

The meeting is divided into multiple concurrent sessions according to streams, covering malignant haematology, transfusion medicine, thrombosis and haemostasis, marrow and stem cell transplant as well as a nurses’ stream. I attended a mixture of sessions from both the malignant and non-malignant haematology streams. On the first day, the plenary Barry Firkin Oration by Professor Phillip Hogg was on the cleavage of allosteric disulphide bonds of cysteine amino acids in the initiation of thrombosis, with prospects of small molecules targeting factors that cleave such bonds to control thrombosis. Other sessions that sparked my interest were the sessions on myeloma, immunotherapy in acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, myeloproliferative disorders and haematological disorders in pregnancy.

The second day began with many oral presentations that were highly molecular in nature and that seemed to set the theme for many of the subsequent sessions for the day. Sessions such as circulating DNA in chronic lymphocytic leukaemia and myeloma, germline variant detection of tumour sample by next generation sequencing, point mutations in Ph-like acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and microRNA expression levels as indicators of thrombotic risks. A fresh departure from the highly molecular nature of the morning sessions, the Ruth Sanger Oration by Associate Professor Erica Wood talked about hemovigilance and blood safety.

The third day had sessions on the revised WHO 2016 classification, aplastic anaemia, science of Bcl2 inhibition and novel therapies in thalassaemia and hemoglobinopathies, which expanded further on what was delivered during the pre-congress haemoglobinopathy symposium. The Carl de Gruchy Oration by Professor Harry Iland brought us down the path of history and progress of treating and curing acute promyelocytic leukaemia, from a highly fatal disease to highly curable one.

The last day began with various oral presentations before concluding with 2 concurrent symposiums, one on RBC and another on DIC. I attended the DIC symposium and especially enjoyed the lecture on Obstetric DIC by Claire McLintock.

Summing up the meeting, the programme covered a mixture of new advances giving a taste of things to come, as well as clinically applicable sessions.

Melbourne is a lovely city but the same cannot be said of its weather, from being cold with a wind chill to being unexpectedly sunny and very warm. Having previously been to Melbourne before did not deter me from revisiting some the nearby attractions.

I would like to express my gratitude to MSH for giving me the opportunity to attend this meeting and to present my poster there. It has been a wonderful educational experience.

