



RENALTRACT

Horizon 2020 – Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
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Development and Disease of the Renal Tract

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RENALTRACT Newsletter 4

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➤ Editorial

A one-year-old RENALTRACT project!

On **June 1st 2015** was officially launched **RENALTRACT Innovative Training Network** under European Union's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action. It coincided with the beginning of a productive and interactive **partnership between 8 leading academic institutions and 2 private companies** inside the network. After the recruitment of 12 PhDs students and 3 international trainings, we can clearly see how fast the progress was made and it brings full of promise for the future!



➤ Latest Updates

RENALTRACT Short-Course 1 “Transferable Skills” – 4 to 9 September 2016 – Paris, France



Next **RENALTRACT Short-Course** on the theme “Transferable Skills” will follow in the first week of September. MyScienceWork, Mosaïques Diagnostics and NIKON will provide technical and practical courses alongside seminars from external speakers.

Glasgow Science Festival – 19 June 2016 – Glasgow, UK

As part of **RENALTRACT outreach activities**, Early Stage Researchers were invited on June 19th at Glasgow Science Festival to present their project to a wide audience. This was of great success as the public was very receptive and the students very enthusiastic. Beyond that, students communicational and organisational skills were undoubtedly enhanced.



➤ Events

RENALTRACT/EURenOmics meeting – 8 to 13 May 2016 – Paris, France – RENALTRACT previous event



RENALTRACT and EURenOmics held combined meeting in Paris last May. It was the occasion for the network to monitor general and individual project progress and to work on improvements. Also, ESRs were invited to attend EURenOmics meeting in order to interact and share views on drosophila model and data management.

Workshop 2 “Animal models” – 20 to 21 June 2016 – Glasgow, UK – RENALTRACT previous event

Back-to-back with Glasgow Science Festival was organised **RENALTRACT Workshop 2 on “Animal models”**. Specialists from the network and professors from University of Glasgow had the courtesy to present their field of interest such as in mouse, drosophila, zebrafish, xenopus and C.elegans models. ESRs also presented their project and early updates.



➤ Student life

In this section, we will ask some questions to **RENALTRACT students** and how they are adapting themselves to **their new life**.

Pauli Tikka – ESR 8 – University-Hospital of Heidelberg



Q: How was your last visit in Glasgow? Could you tell us more about your role in RENALTRACT presentation at Glasgow Science Festival and your feedback about it?

A: “I liked our visit in Glasgow. It was my first time there and the university and the city were great. The place where we stayed was very good alongside the food. It was located in the very hearth of the city and was accessible by walk to the university. The old university buildings with their arched hallways and courtyards impressed me. Some of us visited the nearby museums of "Hunterian" and "Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum". Besides, we had time to collect some fish samples and see some sights at Edinburgh, which was equally beautiful city along sea. Not to mention few, I found the lectures and our project presentations very helpful for my current research, such as Dr. Gehrig's and Dow's presentations. During some interval discussions, I also got some valuable hints who to contact and what approaches to take regarding my research. This visit gave me a very positive image of the science work in Glasgow.

Similarly as many of us ESRs, we had many roles during Glasgow Science Festival. Not only because we needed to distribute our workload or to have intermittent breaks, but we really enjoyed doing various activities. Before and after the festival I was among others preparing the presentation table. During the festival, I was mostly showing puzzles and briefly with balloon stand outside. The children loved the puzzles. The entertaining ESRs were one of the reasons, but also the price of completing the puzzle: kidney shaped candies. The general feedback was very positive and I think we were one of the most visited stand in the festival.”

Q: For how long are you playing cello? Did you play in an orchestra?

A: “I have been playing cello since my childhood. I think I was about 10 years old when I started. In principle, I have played all the time ever since. In Finland, many people go to "musiikkiopisto", music conservatory, which sounds sophisticated, though actually they are

very common. In these conservatories we can play many instruments also in a group, such as orchestra. I have played in the music conservatory's orchestra until I finished my high school and then I continued to play in various university recreational orchestras. I liked to play cello and it is one of my main hobbies.”

Saurav Ghimire – ESR 11 – University of Glasgow

Q: You did part of your studies in South Korea. Can you tell us about it?

A: “My experience of studying and carrying out research started in 2013, at Inje University in South Korea, where I spent two years as a Masters Student. The group of researchers I worked with investigated the role of diet restriction in ageing using *Drosophila Melanogaster* as a model organism. My research emphasis in this group was two folds. Originally, I was largely responsible for research, using different diet condition, and see its effects with aging using different parameters. As my time in the group progressed I took on more responsibilities in molecular analysis and see the effects of concretion formation in tubules with ageing. My role in this capacity was to dissect the flies and mount the tubules, imaging and quantification. While I learned a great deal about the subject matter of this research, the greatest benefit was in applying analytical skills to research problems, especially when given the freedom and responsibilities to work alone for extended periods of time.



Q: What do you do mostly in Glasgow on your free time?

A: “Well, its difficult one to answer. My plans in free time usually depend on the weather of Glasgow. If it's raining I usually remain in my flat but if it's clear, then I have many things to do. I like hanging out with my friends and visiting different places around Glasgow. Other than that, I like to get out and exercise to clear my mind after thinking all day! I play badminton, go running, and play board games with lab mates.”

➤ Carte blanche

This section is a **free zone for one student** (but of course on one topic related to RENALTRACT).

Gunjan Pandey – ESR 12 – University-Hospital of Heidelberg/Acquifer



“I, Gunjan, am enrolled as PhD student in the University of Heidelberg under the umbrella of Renal Tract EU project. My project is in collaboration with Acquifer located in Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Karlsruhe. I moved from sub-zero temperatures of Southern Finland to greenish gray winter of Germany in the end of January, 2016 to begin my project. Its been quite an edifying ride since then. Under the guidance of the previous PhD student I got well acquainted with the fast life-cycle of zebrafish. It was a refreshing switch from my previous work which dealt mostly with the cellular and molecular makeup of life.

I am working now on high through-put screening of potential drug candidates on zebrafish animal model. In doing so I will be sifting through the candidate compounds highlighting those that have positive role in eliminating kidney cysts and singling out the ones with masked negative effect on overall development despite of cyst suppression. As an integral part of the project I will be involved in development of imaging pipeline for quantification of the observed phenotypes. Additionally I will also work on understanding the role of a candidate gene in kidney development, which was identified in GWAS screen conducted earlier. The entire process has ingrained me with several state of art techniques in the field of microscopy and animal handling.

Along with lab work, the project covers all aspects of individual development to sculpt us into fine researchers. Even in the short passage of time that I have spent here I have been provided with several opportunities to present my work in international conferences and workshops. Such an exposure of ongoing work definitely has its impact on the personality enhancement. It ends the monotony by introducing fresh ideas and spruces up the predefined scope of the project.

Now, let me introduce you to the city a little bit. Heidelberg, built on the banks of river Rhine is a cozy city surrounded with hills and huge canopy of treetops. By the riverside through the forests traverses the meandering course of ‘Philosophers Path’, which quite in harmony with its name has been a source of inspiration for several poets and philosophers. I would definitely

recommend a walk here during any time of the day. The city itself has beautiful streets adorned with majestic old houses and tones of cafe. This summer I enjoyed the colorful fireworks at the Heidelberg Castle or as its called in German 'Heidelberger Schlossbeleuchtung'. Its a great city with lots of history. I look forward to enjoy and learn more about it as I progress through my project.”