

Receiving the 2009 CSL Overseas Travel Grant enabled me to visit the International Blood Group Reference Laboratory in Bristol and also attend the 2010 BBTS Annual Scientific Meeting at Bournemouth. My main interest in visiting the IBGRL was to better understand how new molecular technologies are implemented in the field of transfusion medicine. I spent two weeks in the IBGRL and the Molecular Laboratory. A Laboratory sends samples for antibody ID to the IBGRL after all their lab resources have been exhausted in identifying the antibody. At IBGRL, I was able to learn the approach and different methodologies that they use in identifying antibody problems, including complex mixtures of antibodies and investigations of antibodies to high incidence antigens. I learnt about the benefits of a different range of techniques and cell selections used in complex antibody investigations. I also learnt about the international rare donor panel and searching for donors of rare blood type. I spent some time observing serological and molecular techniques for investigating problems with Partial D antigens and other Rh blood group system problems. I also learnt about the sequencing of blood group genes which are performed in red cell reference cases. I also had the opportunity to spend some time in the Molecular Laboratory; this was a very interesting and quite fascinating time. I was particularly excited to see the use of foetal DNA present in the maternal plasma which is used to perform D,K,C,E red cell antigen typing and foetal sex typing. I also had discussion with staff members on analysis of serological results and scientific aspects of molecular genotyping. I also had the opportunity to tour the Filton Blood Centre which incorporates the Manufacturing, Processing, Donor Testing, Histocompatibility and Immunogenicity and Stem Cell Laboratories. My time spent in the IBGRL has definitely allowed me to broaden my knowledge of Red Cell Antigens and use of molecular studies in Transfusion. This knowledge has given me new direction in approaching difficult investigations that I come across in my routine work as a medical scientist.

I also attended the British Blood Transfusion Society ASM. It was an enjoyable experience. At the ASM I presented two posters “Development of Anti-Co^a in pregnancy” and “Drug-induced haemolytic anaemia with Diclofenac and Timentin”. The scientific programme was very interesting; some of the topics and sessions that I particularly enjoyed were “Massive Haemorrhage Protocols”, “Advances in Immunohaematology” and the session on Blood Bank Technology. Attending ASM is a great way to keep up with the rapidly expanding knowledge on different facets of Transfusion Medicine and I am very grateful to ANZSBT for giving me this opportunity and CSL for sponsoring the Overseas Travel Grant.

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