

Activity report on PIANOFORTE Travel grants for early career researchers

-Prabodha Kumar Meher

The PIANOFORTE travel grants for early career researchers I received was utilized to attain the 17th International Congress for Radiation Research (ICRR) held at the Société du Palais des congrès de Montréal in Montréal, Canada, during August 27-30, 2023. This meeting is held every four years and it brings together brilliant, passionate scientists from radiation research societies around the globe to a single platform.

Me as an early career researcher working at center for radiation protection research, department of molecular biology, Stockholm university, Stockholm, Sweden this meeting was an excellent platform to present our work on “Degree of intra-, and inter-individual variability for the risk of developing second malignant neoplasms after radiotherapy for cancer”. I presented a poster (pictures below) on above title during the conference. During the poster presentation, I interacted with diverse radiation researchers. This interaction was having questions, comments and suggestions that really broaden my knowledge further. This meeting was also allowed me to learn new knowledge in various topics of radiation research and helped me to meet new expert in the field that will certainly help me in knowledge sharing in the future. Out of many, I highlight below some of the key events and session from the conference that were really helpful for me.

- The Conference started on a high note in the morning of Saturday, August 26 with an excellent pre-workshop specially dedicated to early career researchers and scholar in training. The expert talk by Robin Elgart from NASA and Kathryn Held on NCRP was quite useful. Subsequently the lectures on grant writing by Marco Durante, Julie K. Schwarz, Gayle Woloschak, Andrea Dicarlo-Cohen were really useful. In addition, the networking with young researchers to form teams and taking part in an exciting exercise to write a draft proposal within an hour was a thrilling real hands-on training.
- The welcome plenary talk on “Structural and functional insights into Non-Homologous End-Joining” _by Susan Lees-Miller was really insightful. The DNA Damage and repair mechanisms always the backbone of radiation research, which helps us to understand how cells responses after exposure to ionizing radiation.
- The dedicated session on radiation protection was really beneficial for me to attain. Specially listening the talk on “Revision of the system of radiological protection - recent activities and future plans” _by Werner Ruehm was really informative for me to know the current activities and concerns of ICRP.
- Molecular responses at low dose of ionizing radiation has been an interesting topic for me. It was helpful for me to attain the special session on “Molecular responses at low dose” _during the conference. The talks on this latest studies in this topic and brainstorming was something that I really enjoyed and are helpful.

This partnership has received funding from the European Union’s “EURATOM” research and innovation program under the 101061037 grant agreement.

- Biodosimetry and biomarkers of radiation exposure has been essential part of radiation protection. A dedicated session to discuss the latest study and advancement on the field was held on 28 August, 2023. It was really exciting to take part and learn about new methods and approaches during this session.
- Another session that I really enjoyed was the debate on “Adverse outcome pathways (AOPs) are a distraction from advancing radiation risk assessment” _where Doug Boreham talked ‘FOR’ _the title and Gayle Woloschak talked ‘AGAINST’ _the title. It is interesting for me to know how the scientific community cannot simply ignore the AOP during radiation risk assessment. It will be also exciting to see in future how AOPs comes along with radiation protection.
- Furthermore, I found it enlightening to engage in discussions related to pressing issues in radiation research, including subjects like "AI in biomedical research" and "Chromatin Architecture and Epigenetics in DNA damage and repair." It was exciting to listen personal perspective and interact with upcoming NASA astronaut Christopher L. Williams on the importance and challenges of radiation research in space exploration.

To celebrate the five-day-long scientific discourse, learning, knowledge exchange, and networking, the conference concluded on Wednesday, August 30th, with a final evening dinner attended by all the radiation researchers.

Participating in this conference was an extraordinary and indelible experience, as it profoundly enriched my understanding on radiation research from various perspectives. I extend my gratitude to PIANOFORTE, the European partnership for radiation research, for their generous travel grant support that enabled early career researchers like me to attend this event.

Thank you very much!

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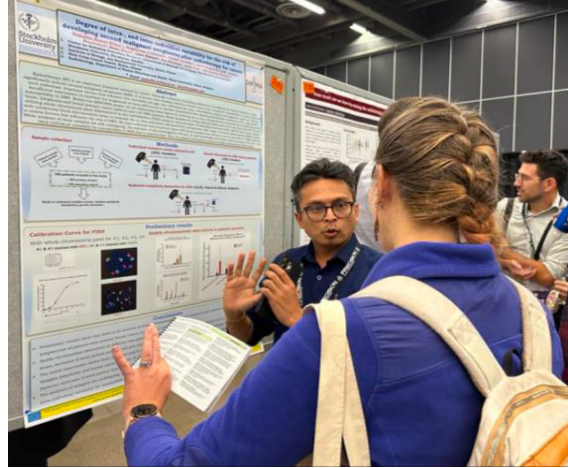
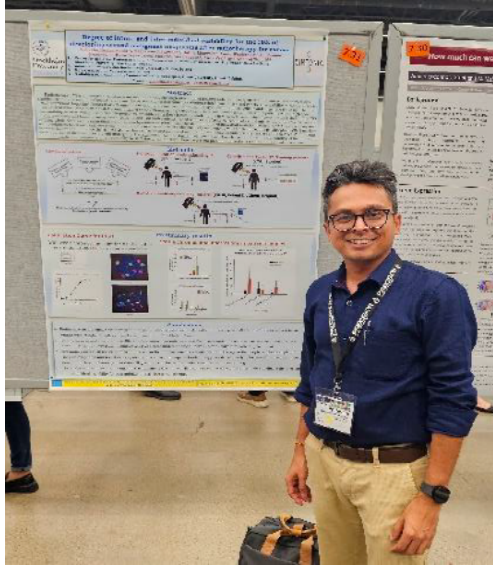
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[Wojcik group webpage](#)

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(Prabodha with the Poster during ICRR 2023)



(Prabodha at ICRR-2023 meeting venue)

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