

Rapporteur Report on the
ESF/EMBO Symposium on

“B there or die? The role of the microenvironment in B cell behaviour in health and disease”

Hotel Eden Roc, Saint Feliu, Spain 16 – 21 May 2015

This very informative ESF-EMBO Symposium on B cells was directed by Prof. Idit Shachar, Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel.

More than 100 participants out of 18 countries attended the meeting (more than 80 Post-Docs and senior scientists, and 21 invited speakers). The delegates were mostly from Europe and Israel, but also from Australia, USA, Canada and South-Africa.

Prof. Shachar, together with her dedicated colleagues, and supported by a highly respected international faculty, has come up with an excellent program of lectures and short talks, that covered all mayor areas of B cells behaviour in health and disease.

In 7 sessions the following topics were covered:

- Maintenance of B cells in health
- Immune niches in health
- Regulation and communication in disease, twice
- Short talks from early career stage researchers, twice
- B cell microenvironment-regulation, survival and function in disease

The sessions included 9 selected short 15 minutes-talks of younger scientists in addition of presenting their posters in the poster sessions. Many excellent talks were given by the invited faculty, outstanding, at least to my mind, were the presentations by Klaus Rajewsky, Berlin and Fabienne Mackay, Melbourne. Altogether 52 posters were on display.

Of great interest to all scientists were the vivid discussions in particular by the younger participants after the talks and during coffee breaks and siestas. The outstanding faculty by their way of discussing the various topics was able to attract and to fascinate the participants.

The Symposium took place at the Eden Roc Hotel set in a lovely bay of Costa Brava in Sant Feliu. Accommodation was very good and catering excellent. Great advantage was that delegates could use the Internet (WI-FI) without additional cost. In the hotel were available equipment for sporting activities (outdoor and indoor

swimming pool). These facilities were free of charge to the delegates and provided a good opportunity to network as well as relax during evenings.

Altogether, I feel, the Symposium was a great success, because it was very well organized. The faculty was extremely well selected. Two points became very obvious, first: how well the young people discussed and interacted and second: how many female scientists took active part in the meeting. Certainly there was no gender issue. At the end of symposium a questionnaire was send out to rank the lecturers, the posters, the poster sessions, accommodation, catering, etc.

The Chair must be congratulated as she were able to rise some additional sponsor-money that allowed to support several PhD-students to attend, which otherwise would have not been able to do so. Thus the modest ESF money was well spent.

At the end of the Symposium the clear interest and necessity was aired, that despite the fact that ESF will not be able to support conferences in the future, a further Symposium on B cells must take place, hopefully supported by EMBO, as so many burning questions are still open and there exists no other conference series that focuses on B cells and is open to all interested European scientists.

Erlangen, 01.06.2015

Rapporteur

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