

I was attending the ECI (European congress of immunology) 2024 in Dublin from the 1st to the 4th of September. There were over 2.600 researcher participating, and over 1.400 poster were presented, which made it a very impressive but also chaotic experience. In the 4 days of conference there were a total of 11 workshop session with up to 10 different sessions in parallel. The program also included keynote speakers and lunch symposiums. Therefore, it was impossible to attend all the sessions, which was sometimes a bit disappointing. But on the other hand, the four days of intense science already required a lot of focus and energy from my side the way it was. The most exciting talk I heard was the one from James P. Allison on checkpoint inhibitors during the keynote session. It interested me due to the success story of the checkpoint inhibitors. Immune checkpoint inhibitors function by inhibiting the interaction between checkpoint proteins and their ligands, thereby preventing the transmission of inhibitory signals. This disruption allows T cells to remain active and target cancer cells for destruction. It is used in cancer therapy and has been a great and successful therapy so far.

Tak Mak, a former colleague from James P. Allison and also a keynote speaker who also studied the checkpoint inhibitors was not the one to find the specific checkpoint inhibitor which is now one of the most used ones for the clinics, but he also didn't stop his research and is now very successful in different fields of research. This showed me once again how many research areas one can do research in and that one can sometimes find out something important for the future of many people. I also liked the session "aging and the immune system" because it's a super interesting topic, but it's not a topic I deal with in my day-to-day research. In between the sessions, I also had inspiring conversations with several researchers about their topics or my own project. This led to some great ideas concerning the future of my own research and which approaches I should consider for the next steps. One suggestion for my project was for example, to check also for biomarkers in plasma which are expressed by osteoclast precursors. Furthermore, I increase my scientific network and made some new friends.

All in all, the conference was a nice experience, and I really appreciated the gained knowledge and impression in general.