

Myelin conference stimulates new collaborations

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Dr Kaylene Young and Dr Ben Emery

MS Research Australia recently supported the 2015 Myelin Meeting, a satellite meeting of the biennial conference of the International Society of Neurochemistry held in late September in Cairns.

This meeting was organised by Australian researchers Dr Kaylene Young from the Menzies Institute for Medical Research in Tasmania, who is also a member of the MS Research Australia [Research Management Council](#), and Dr Ben Emery, a former MS Research Australia-supported researcher, who now heads his own laboratory at the Oregon Health and Sciences University in the USA.

Attracting around 80 delegates from around the world (including the USA, the UK, Australia, Germany, France, Japan, and Denmark), the meeting was a highly successful gathering of international researchers specialising in the study of myelin, including a high proportion of early career researchers.

The meeting was held in a unique, tropical setting that encouraged interaction among the participants and created a very collegial atmosphere, allowing many new research collaborations to be forged. In particular, this was an exceptional meeting for encouraging greater interactions between students and senior scientists.

The scientific program of the meeting covered a range of subjects relating to different aspects of myelin growth and development, with a strong mix of established scientists and emerging researchers presenting their work. Melbourne scientists Dr Junhua Xiao and Dr Holly Cate, and Dr Matthias Klugmann from NSW were among those to present their work.

The meeting was opened by a keynote presentation from Professor William Richardson from the University College London, who spoke about his new work looking at the myelin producing oligodendrocytes, and how their precursor cells grow and develop. He has shown that these precursor cells can respond to the external environment and begin growing within only two hours, when previously it was thought to take days or weeks for these cells to respond to environmental triggers.

The meeting's closing lecture was given by Professor Klaus Nave, the Director of the Max Planck Institute for Experimental Medicine in Germany. Professor Nave highlighted the important role that oligodendrocytes play in maintaining energy metabolism in cells, and how this relates to the degeneration of nerve cells in MS.

Five exceptional early career researchers were each awarded a AU\$500 travel grant (jointly sponsored by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and MS Research Australia). This was a fitting reward for the up and coming research stars in the myelin research field.