LS² Travel Grant report

American Society of Hematology (01.12.18 - 4.12.18) in San Diego, CA, USA

First, I would like to thank the LS² society and especially the autophagy department of the LS² for giving me the funding, and thus the opportunity to attend such a great international meeting as the American Society of Hematology (ASH) 2018. The impressions I experienced during my first big international meeting will last throughout my scientific career. The meeting of the American society of hematology is the biggest hematology meeting in the world and is annually held in December. It brings more than 25000 clinicians, scientist, and other attendees together to discuss critical issues and latest findings in hematology. During four days, the program is tightly scheduled with several cutting-edge educational programs, scientific sessions as well as oral and poster presentations that are chosen by peer-reviewers from submitted abstracts.

The beginning of our journey already started roughly because we missed the connecting flight to Los Angeles due to delay of the first flight. Luckily, the airline rebooked us to a flight later during the day, which resulted in a late arrival at the hotel in San Diego (Figure 1). The following day, we registered for the meeting and although we were quite tired because of the late arrival the day before we went to a leukemia workshop before the actual meeting started. After several hours of presentations, we started to feel the jetlag but we fought bravely and made it through the workshop. On Saturday, we woke up early (which was quite easy thanks to the jetlag) to attend the first talks of the ASH meeting, which we picked out carefully from a wide range of sessions that were given at the same time. After few big cups of Starbucks coffee and a

Figure 1: View from our hotel room on downtown San Diego. On the right, one can see a tent like building which is the convention center where many talks were held.

Figure 2: Me in front of my poster made of canvas during one of the huge poster sessions.
long day full of presentation, the first of three poster sessions started in a room as big as a hangar. Among thousands of other PhD students and Postdocs, I presented my poster to many international researchers for more than 2 hours (Figure 2). After interesting conversations about my project, we were quite hungry, thus we went to a fish restaurant and enjoyed some fish tacos. On Sunday, we needed to get up early again because we subscribed for a 5K ASH foundation charity run at 7.30 am. After the warm up, we were even able to get hold on the president of the ASH and took a picture with her right before the run started (Figure 3). After a strong group internal competition during the run and a reviving shower, we felt ready for some sessions about transcription regulation during hematopoietic differentiation. In the evening, there was another poster session, when some members of our team presented their poster, thus I had time to stroll among the many posters to get some more impressions and ideas for my project. The following day, we were rather tired from the tight meeting schedule we had, thus we went for a longer lunch break on Coronado Island where we had a nice view on downtown San Diego with the convention center and the hotels, where the sessions were held (Figure 4). In the afternoon, we went to a plenary session about the concept of blood stem cells while fighting still against the jetlag with some Starbucks coffee. On Tuesday, the last day of the meeting we attended the rather interesting presidential symposium about gene therapy and the social and ethical aspects in the genomic age. Lastly, we attended the session “Best Of ASH”, where they recapitulated some of the best oral abstracts given during the meeting. After all, I had a great time with my group at the ASH 2018 in San Diego and we were able to network and get a latest update on the
current research in the field of hematology. This experience was only possible because I received the LS² travel grant, thus I’m very grateful to the LS² committee for giving me the opportunity visiting the ASH 2018 in San Diego. Thanks a lot!