

Asia Pacific Nutrigenomics and Nutrigenetics Organisation – First biannual meeting at Gyeongju, South Korea

The directors of NuGO, Lorraine Brennan and Baukje de Roos, were invited to attend first APNNO event to deliver key lectures for the scientific programme of a 2-day meeting on December 5th and 6th 2017. APNNO was established 2 years ago during the ISNN meeting at the Gold Coast in Australia by delegates from Australia, New Zealand, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan because it was felt that the Asia Pacific countries needed a separate meeting that would address nutrigenomic issues specific for this region of the world. During the opening speeches by their first president, Michael Fenech and their new president, Young-Joon Surh, they did indicate, however, that they would value a close alliance with NuGO.

Over the course of the 2 days many of the talks presented data where transcriptomics was used as a means to understand molecular pathways. For example Myung-Sook Choi (Kungpook National University, Korea) detailed her study where she used transcriptomics to understand differences between obesity prone and resistant phenotypes in mice. Transcriptomic profiles eWAT and liver revealed common and divergent patterns of transcriptional changes between the phenotypes.

A strong emergent theme from many of the talks revolved was the potential of bioactives as functional foods with many speakers highlighting the large consumer market for such products in Asia. Sue-Joan Chang (Taiwan) gave an overview of the role and mechanisms of action of bioactives in terms of glucose/lipid homeostasis showing some very elegant work in relation to oligonol. Hisanori Kato (Tokyo, Japan) talked about the functional food market in Japan and gave an example of some work in relation to genisten.

Lorraine and Baukje were invited to attend the Executive Committee Meeting with APNNO on the evening of the 5th to discuss how we could facilitate a close collaboration between APNNO and NuGO in the coming years. We believe there are some exciting opportunities for NuGO members to establish links with Asian groups. This may include the organisation of joined NuGO-APNNO international courses for young investigators, for which NuGO members could apply for travel grants. We are also considering whether we can facilitate some NuGO staff hosted by APNNO members in the near future. This would extend the opportunities for NuGO members for learning journeys, giving this NuGO activity a truly global character. It would also facilitate the initiation of closer research links between Europe and Asian Pacific countries and give NuGO more visibility in Asia.

The meeting ended in the Sky Bar of the Hilton hotel with a very enjoyable evening of karaoke. We would like to note that a duet between Lorraine and Baukje was the only song that scored 100 points that evening!