

## **ANZBMS International Travel Award 2014**

### **Final Report – Ashika Chhana**

Dear members of the ANZBMS Council,

Firstly, I would like to thank ANZBMS for awarding me one of the three International Travel Awards, which allowed me to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> biennial IBMS Herbert Fleisch Workshop in Brugge, Belgium. I am very grateful to ANZBMS for providing funds for my travel.

Attending the first workshop in honour of the late Professor Herbert Fleisch was both a privilege and a highly enjoyable experience. With fewer than 150 delegates and no concurrent sessions, the meeting was very interactive and I was able to meet and discuss my research with many of the other delegates and senior scientists present, which is sometimes more difficult in larger conferences. The scientific content of the meeting was very impressive and there was a wide range of skeletal research topics covered. The sessions on ‘bone repair and regeneration’ and ‘osteocytes’ was particularly relevant to the research I am now conducting back in Auckland. From these sessions and after speaking with other researchers in this field, I have gained insight into novel methods and pathways, which will help me progress our research into joint damage in chronic gout.

There was a heavy focus on posters at this workshop and all young investigators were encouraged to bring a poster and attend the multiple viewing sessions. Our team from the Department of Medicine at the University of Auckland had two poster presentations, including my own, which described the interactions between MSU crystals and tenocytes (cells of the tendon), and how these interactions contribute to the development of tendon damage in gout. There was great interest in my poster presentation and I received very positive feedback from other delegates and the experienced senior scientists present. Discussions around my poster have given me ideas for future work to continue this line of research into tendon damage in gout.

On my return to Auckland, my colleague and I gave a seminar to the Auckland Bone & Joint Research Group, summarising the keynote lectures and some of the interesting research that was presented at the IBMS Herbert Fleisch Workshop. This was followed by much discussion and possible ideas for future research in our lab. Overall I feel this workshop was incredibly valuable to my career as a junior post-doctoral researcher.

I very much appreciate your support that enabled me to travel to the beautiful city of Brugges.

Thank you,

Ashika Chhana PhD