

October 10th, Cordoba, Argentina

Dear ISN Secretariat,

Earlier this year I have been awarded a Travelling Fellowship by the International Society for Neurochemistry – CAEN to visit another laboratory. For this purpose I have been kindly hosted by Dr. Chig-Hwa Sung from Weill Medical College of Cornell University in New York for four months.

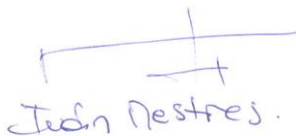
During my stay I had the opportunity to exchange ideas and work with a group of very talented scientists. The time I spent there helped me to learn some useful skills (e.g. molecular cloning) and improve others that I handled already (e.g. immunohistochemistry). Very importantly, I also had the chance to obtain results using a knockout mice strain for the protein of our interest: SARA, which is not available in my country. Not only I have learned from all of my colleagues but also I can say I have now a new group of friends.

SARA (Smad Anchor for Receptor Activation) is a protein involved in endosomal machinery control. Our groups and others have previously shown that SARA localizes to endosomes where it regulates their structure and function. During my short stay I have studied the role of SARA during neuronal development in situ. The main outcome of these experiments is that the absence of SARA during brain formation leads to defects in neuron orientation and migration, and this in turn is mediated by the adhesion molecule L1-CAM. We expect to send at least a manuscript to a high impact journal in the next few months showing these results. Moreover, I already presented a short communication early this month at the annual congress of the Sociedad Argentina de Neurociencias –SAN (Neuroscience Argentine Society) entitled: Evidence for the involvement of SARA in neuronal migration and orientation through L1-CAM.

In sum, this was a great professional and personal experience and therefore I am highly grateful to the ISN-CAEN. This short stay will definitely impact my career in a positive way: I had to communicate my ideas effectively in a language that is not my own, discuss experiments and literature, write a project, generate new hypotheses, resolve technical issues, produce my own tools (e.g. plasmids and animals) and so on. Having gone through all those steps by myself will make me stand firmer and more resolute for future scientific challenges. Hence, I thank your organization for this significant opportunity and strongly encourage future students to go on such experience during their PhD studies.

Lastly, please find attached a photo with the host lab.

Best regards,



Juan Nestres.