ISBER Travel Award 2018 Meeting Report
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by
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The National Liver Disease Biobank, New Delhi, India and I are grateful for the opportunity I was granted to attend the ISBER Annual Meeting in Dallas, USA from May 20-24, 2018. The National Liver Disease Biobank (NLDB) is the first Liver Biobank in the India. Established with the joint support of Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences and Department of Biotechnology, Gov. of India for clinical and basic research in the field of HCV, Liver disease, Gallbladder and other associated cancer and non cancer diseases. The mission of the NLDB is to develop an independent, open accessible, advanced national biobank facility, which could provide proficient biological sample storage, cataloguing, for ready reference and retrieval, high-end analytical services through skilled manpower along with human resource training in biobanking. With the goal of national capacity building in Liver disease research by fostering collaboration, communication, education, sharing the services and informatics, NLDB will be established as a nodal centre for, cancer community, translational and basic researchers including pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.

Biobanking Sciences is less developed in India and funding agencies do not have travel fund in this area. It would have been impossible for me to attend the meeting without the support of ISBER as travel award. My participation in this meeting was timely as NLDB is newly established Biobank and I have responsibility to develop and to make this biobank as model for other Indian Biobanks.

As Manager of NLDB, I looked forward to the ISBER Conference with great expectations for learning and making network with experts in this field. The theme of meeting “Thinking BIG in TEXAS: Seizing BIG Opportunities in BIOBANKING through Data, Collaboration and Innovation” motivated me to apply for this fellowship. I would like thanks VERONICA DABROWSKI Association Coordinator of ISBER and Ronald Ross for their help at the last moment of itinerary issues.

I attended conference workshop, symposia sessions, contributed paper sessions, an innovative Technologies session, special workshop on selected topics and vendor exhibits to maximize my experience and to empower me to effect overall operations, infrastructure, policies, and protocols at NLDB.
Conference session was started with ISBER welcome and opening remarks of by ISBER President Dr. Zisis Kozlakidis. The plenary session entitled “Creating Global Impact through Big Ideas and Biobanking: finding common ground in diversity” explained the importance of quality biobanking in the research and its global impact. This session also taught me how NLDB can play role in global impact by bridging the gap between biobanking and stockholders communities. Symposium 2A: Advocacy in Biobanking educated me about role of advocacy within biobanking establishment, operation, policies and research. It would be highly useful for me because we are in initial stage of establishment of biobank.

NLDB is in the process of creating a business model so I was more interested on session “Sustainability in motion: Biobanking takes strategic dialogue and Innovation”. This session insight me how to overcome with sustainability challenges with pre-planned innovative strategies like academia–pharma collaboration. Prominent discussion points and talks will be extremely helpful to me as we review our Business Model at NLDB. I would like to thanks selection committee for giving me opportunities as speaker in contributed paper session 2: Biobanking: BiG Opportunities, Big ELSI on topic entitled “National Liver Disease Biobank: Fostering Research Collaboration across India and Abroad. Balwir Matharoo Ball”s presentation on “Professionalization of the Biobanking Sector highlighted the importance of biobank organogram in the management and operation of biobank.

Our Biobank had lot of question and doubts about the accreditation of biobank. After attending the Special topic workshop: “ISO and ISBER and CAP, OH MY!” and interactions with panellist , I knew how to get accreditation for biobank and its importance in to achieve goal of quality specimens that are fit for purpose.

I interacted with many experts in Biobanking and now we are in touch for collaborative work in this field. I liked Social events which included a meet and greet for new members, a 5k walk/run/sleep fundraiser in support of future travel awards.

At last, this meeting was expressive; session was well structured and global biobank experts from each sector were there. ISBER meeting is right place to learn to know what is happening in the biorepository and biobanking community.