

TERATOSPHAERIA RESEARCH REPRESENTED AT THE 30TH FUNGAL GENETICS CONFERENCE

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The prestigious Fungal Genetics Conference is held biennially at Asilomar Hotel and Conference Grounds in Monterey, California. This is the largest fungal genetics conference in the world. It is hosted by the Genetics Society of America as well as *Genetics* and *G3* journals.

Postdoc Dr Janneke Aylward and PhD candidate were among 1,000 scientists that took part in this conference held from 12 to 17 March 2019. The conference included four plenary sessions with a total of 20 talks and concurrent sessions in the afternoon with a total of 224 talks. Presentations that stood out included those by Professor Li-Jun Ma who talked about lineage-specific chromosomes of Arturo Casadevall, who made us rethink how we perceive virulence.



Noteworthy concurrent sessions that were directly relevant to the current *Teratosphaeria* research included “The fungal genome: Structure, stability and evolution”, “RNA biology”, “Mating and sexual reproduction” and “Fungal genetics updated: genome sequencing, mutant screening and recombination analysis”.

Three poster sessions were held in the evenings, with a total of *Teratosphaeria* 647 posters presented, of which 251 posters presented specifically focused around research. Dr Aylward, who was awarded a GSA travel award, presented two posters, namely “Idiosyncrasies of the mating type (MAT) locus in Capnodiales genomes” and “Phylogenomics of *Teratosphaeria* leaf and stem pathogens” in the comparative and functional genomics category.

Minette, who was awarded an NRF KIC travel grant, presented a poster entitled “Mating strategy and mating type distribution of economically important *Teratosphaeria* tree pathogens” in the population and evolutionary genetics category.

Both Janneke and Minette attended the Dothideomycete comparative genomics workshop. The genus *Teratosphaeria* is Eucalypt-associated fungus that is part of the Dothideomycete family. Minette also attended the Peer review workshop hosted by *Genetics* and *G3* journals.

This interactive workshop gave attendees the opportunity to review an article in a group setup and have a panel discussion with the editors of these journals. This was a very valuable learning opportunity, in which both editorial and manuscript writing skills were developed.

Attendees were privileged to hear Prof. John Taylor present his last conference talk by ending the conference with the Perkins/Metzenberg lecture, which was outstanding. All in all this has been a scientifically very interesting and rewarding conference to attend. We both benefited considerably from the international exposure of our research and the opportunity to share our results in the global arena.