



1st issue, April 2011

RETROSPECT

- 30 Apr. 2006 – application deadline for AntiMal PhD Programme
- 13/14 Jun. 2006 – interviews at EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany
- 1 Oct. 2006 – start of work contracts
- 8-21 Oct. 2006 – core course, Montpellier, France
- 10-12 Apr. 2007 – 3rd Annual BioMalPar Conference, EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany
- 13 Apr. 2007 – 1st AntiMal Conference, EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany
- 19-27 Nov. 2007 – course on “Scientific Writing and Presenting in English”, London, UK
- 14-16 Apr. 2008 – 4th Annual BioMalPar Conference, EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany
- 20-28 Nov. 2008 – course on “Managing Projects & the World of Enterprise”, Montpellier, F
- 18-20 May 2009 – 5th Annual BioMalPar Conference, EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany
- 2-6 Nov. 2009 – 5th MIM Pan-African Malaria Conference, Nairobi, Kenya
- Mar.– Nov. 2010 – final defenses of 10 AntiMal students at the respective universities
- Mar. – Sept. 2010 – end of work contracts / start of new positions

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REUNION for 4 students at AntiMal Conference

Antimalarial Drugs: chemistry, development and future challenges
London, 15 & 16 March 2011

Session five-Chair: Prof. Michael Lanzer

Dr. Abdirahman Abdi
Kilifi, Kenya

Tyrosine Kinase-like Kinases of *P. falciparum* as the antimalarial drug target

Dr. Francesc Marti
University of Liverpool

Antimalarial monoxanes: Hybrid antimalarial drugs with outstanding oral activity profiles and potential dual mechanism of action

Dr. Ksenija Slavic
Institute for Medical Research, Belgrade
Plasmodium hexose transporter as antimalarial target

Dr. Fatima Bousejra-El Garah
University of Toulouse
From Artemisinin to trioxaquines and tetraoxanes: Role of heme in the mode of action of antimalarial peroxides



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Abdirahman Abdi

Thesis defense: Nov. 2010, Heidelberg

By the end of April 2010, I had received postdoctoral position offers from two institutions, (i) Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Pretoria campus South Africa and (ii) Kemri-wellcome trust research programme in Kilifi, Kenya. I opted for the latter considering being situated in my own country and taking into account the excellent scientific output of this institution, especially in the field of malaria research. I moved back to Kenya on 31st May 2010 with my family and that is where I am currently.

I work with Dr Peter Bull whose research interest is on the multi-gene family (Vars) encoding the exported surface antigens referred to as PfEMP1 and it's role in the pathogenesis of severe malaria. My postdoctoral work is aimed at furthering our understanding of the pathogenesis of severe malaria in relation to the var gene expression profile of the malaria parasite obtained from patients with an acute clinical disease.

After this postdoc I hope to make a grant application and start asking my own questions.



Abdi with his new colleagues (to his left Dr. Peter Bull)



Abdi in his new office (which he shares with others)

Abdi's daughter:

Yusra

born on 20 Dec. 2008



Changes since Oct. 2006: 1st child Yusra was born on 20. Dec. 2008

Current position: Postdoc at the KEMRI Wellcome Trust Research Programme, Kilifi

Contact details: Abdirahman Abdi, KEMRI-wellcome trust research laboratories, P.O. Box 230, 80108 Kilifi, Kenya

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Ayene Alemu

I am very well and after my time in the Antimal PhD Programme I joined my home university where I still work. You can reach me as follows:

Current position: Addis Ababa University

Contact details: Ayene Alemu, Addis Ababa University School of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, P.O.Box. 1176, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

E-mail: a_ayene@yahoo.com



AntiMal PhD Programme

Web: www.antimal.eu/phd_programmes.htm

Email: antimal.info@med.uni-heidelberg.de



European Malaria Graduate School



Sara Finaurini

Thesis defense: Apr. 2010, Milan

In January 2011, I started a Post Doc position in the laboratory of Optical Manipulation working with Dr. Dan Cojoc at the National Laboratory of Advanced Technologies and NanoScience (TASC) of IOM-CNR, located in the Area Science Park of Trieste (Italy).

For many years, this laboratory has been working with Optical Tweezers (OT), a non invasive manipulation technique, which is combined with a high resolution light microscopy and with fluorescence imaging to study neurons and cancer cells. At the same time, OT allows to trap single cells and to measure extremely small forces (picoNewton) and displacements (nanometer). This application has been used in our lab to study motor proteins, the membrane elasticity of cancer cells.

Based on recent observations about OT as a suitable tool to study the deformability of parasitized red blood cell membrane, I focused my project on the changes in morphology and composition of erythrocytic membranes infected by *P. falciparum*. For this analysis, OT will be coupled to Raman Spectroscopy (RS), which is a non invasive technique based on inelastic scattering of laser light, providing information about molecular structure. This combination between OT and RS gives us the opportunity to analyze a single red blood cell under physiological conditions, to identify and quantify biochemical changes and to set up an optical method to differentiate parasitized red blood cells from uninfected erythrocytes, without damages or complicated sample preparations. The combined application of these techniques will provide important information about the malaria infection, which can also be useful for a diagnostic approach.

Let's cross fingers for this new challenge!



Sara with her daughter Anna Bonifacio at the seaside of Miramare Castle (Trieste, Italy)

Changes since Oct. 2006: marriage in May 2008, 1st child Ana was born on 7 Nov. 2009

Current position: Postdoc at the National Laboratory of Advance Technologies & NanoScience, Trieste

Contact details: Sara Finaurini, Laboratorio Nazionale TASC CNR-IOM, Area Science Park Basovizza, S.S. 14 km 163,5, I-34149 Trieste, Italy, <http://www.tasc.infm.it/research/om/scheda.php>

E-mail: finaurini@tasc.infm.it; sarafinaurini@gmail.com

Huaqing Cui

Thesis defense: Nov. 2010, Heidelberg



Huaqing at his new workplace, the university of Minnesota

After my PhD studies, I moved to US to continue a post-doctoral research in January 2011. I am working in the Center for Drug Design, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. I am still working in the area of Medicinal Chemistry, to make new chemicals for human cancer disease. So far, I very much enjoy the work and life here, but sometimes miss the happy time in Europe.

I was offered a CHINESE GOVERNMENT AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SELF-FINANCED STUDENTS ABROAD, which is mainly due to my good performance in my PhD thesis. I am thankful for all the support from the Antimal community. I am very happy to keep in touch with my European colleagues. Hopefully I can work with my European colleagues either in Science or other business in the future.

Current position: Postdoc at the University of Minnesota

Contact details: Huaqing Cui, Center for Drug Design, Univ. of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, USA

E-mail: huaqingcui@gmail.com

AntiMal PhD Programme

Web: www.antimal.eu/phd_programmes.htm

Email: antimal.info@med.uni-heidelberg.de

Ksenija Slavic

Thesis defense: Jun. 2010, Heidelberg

After I completed my PhD, I moved back to Serbia where I started a new research post (1st of September 2010) at the Institute of Medical Research, University of Belgrade. I joined a parasitology group led by Prof. Olgica Djurkovic-Djakovic. The research Centre that Prof. Djurkovic-Djakovic heads is devoted to research in the field of parasitology, and has recently been accredited as the first Centre of Excellence in the area of biomedicine in Serbia, having enhanced its capacities largely through the EU FP6 – SERBPARTOON project. We have established formal collaborations with Prof. Sanjeev Krishna, my PhD supervisor from St. George's University of London, as well as with Prof. Bogdan Solaja from the Faculty of Chemistry, University of Belgrade, involved in synthesis of novel compounds with antimalarial action. I am happy to be able to share my time between labs in Belgrade and London and excited to continue my research career in the malaria field.



Ksenija with her new colleagues, Prof. Olgica Djurkovic-Djakovic's group, in their lab at the Institute for Medical Research in Belgrade

Current position: Postdoc at University of Belgrade

Contact details: Institute for Medical Research, University of Belgrade, Dr Subotica 4, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

E-mail: ksenija.slavic@imi.bg.ac.rs

Fatima Bouseijra El-Garah

Thesis defense: Mar. 2010, Toulouse



Fatima in her new office at the Laboratoire de Chimie de Coordination

Changes since Oct. 2006: has married & expects her first child in May 2011

Current position: Postdoc at the University of Toulouse

My Antimal PhD project was focused on the role of metal in the mode of action of antimalarial peroxides. For my PhD I spent the first 2 years in Toulouse where I worked on the interactions of various peroxides with metal containing porphyrins with Dr Anne Robert and Prof Bernard Meunier. In 2009, I joined Prof Paul O'Neill's group in Liverpool where I continued to carry out mechanistic work on the tetraoxane class of antimalarials. I finished my PhD in March 2010.

Being an Antimal PhD student was a great and fruitful experience. I am thankful to the programme for giving me the opportunity to present my work during conferences (Heidelberg, Nairobi, London) and for the various courses we attended, both technical and in communication, management, etc.

In April 2010, I started a post-doc position in the group of Prof Peter Faller at the Laboratoire de Chimie de Coordination in Toulouse. I now work on Alzheimer disease and study the role of metals in the formation in vitro of amyloid plaques, with a special interest on iron effect.

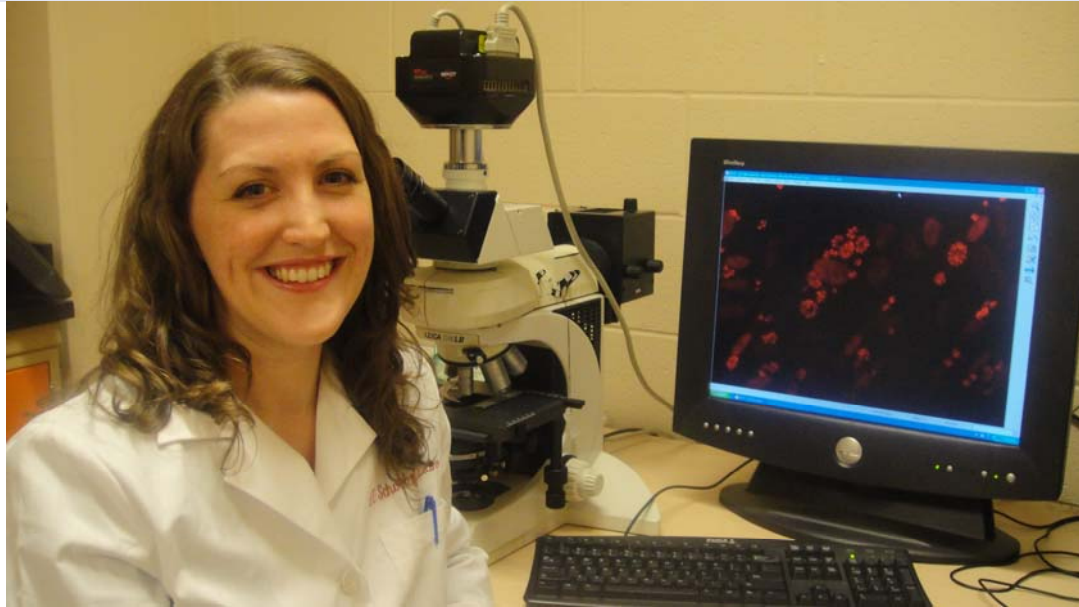
My husband and I also expect a baby girl for the end of May 2011. We are both very excited about this new experience.

Victoria Jeffers

Thesis defense: Nov. 2010, Heidelberg

Since completing my PhD in November 2010, I have been working in Dr. Bill Sullivan's group at Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis, USA.

My work here is concerned with epigenetic gene regulation in the Apicomplexan parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, specifically the role of acetyltransferases in parasite physiology. I am enjoying the opportunity to use the skills which I have gained during my PhD to study a parasite closely related to *Plasmodium*. It is my hope that my research on *Toxoplasma* may also be applied to *Plasmodium*, leading to a better understanding of the biology of these important and fascinating parasites.



Vicki at the fluorescent microscope studying some immunofluorescence assays of Toxoplasma parasites.

Current position: Postdoc at Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis

Contact details: Victoria Jeffers, Sullivan lab, Indiana University School of Medicine, Dept of Pharmacology & Toxicology, 635 Barnhill Drive, MS A-515, Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA

E-mail: jeffersv@iupui.edu

Archana Kaniti

Thesis defense: Oct. 2010, Montpellier

After my defence, I came to India for delivery. I am still in India having a nice time with my daughter. I am applying for new positions in UK. Though I am applying for all biochemistry and molecular biology jobs, I would love to continue to work in the field of malaria. Meanwhile I am working on my paper.



*Archana's daughter:
Aadya Kolupula
born on 28 Dec. 2010*



Archana together with her husband Dr. Yuvaraj Kolupula

Changes since Oct. 2006: marriage in Oct. 2008, 1st child Aadya was born on 28 Dec. 2010

Current position: enjoying family life

E-mail: kaniti19@gmail.com

Francesc Marti Gimeno

Thesis defense: Sep. 2010, Montpellier



Francesc next to the Eilean Donan Castle, one of the places he visited in Scotland during his holidays.

After finishing my PhD I continued in Prof. O'Neill's group in Liverpool as a research associate for several months, which allowed me to wrap up the work of my PhD. I just finished there and three new papers about our new antimalarial candidates should come out very soon.

Right now I am back in Barcelona with my family; since I did not have a break after I finished my thesis I decided to have one now before I start working again. I have been very busy; I travelled across Scotland for 10 days, then spent three days on the carnival in Portugal and finally went to Las Fallas in Valencia...exhausting!!

I have not got a new job yet, so I am currently looking for one. I would like to continue my research with a post-doctoral position for one or two years and after that probably get a "real" job. I am still trying to figure out where, maybe in the USA or somewhere in Europe, not sure yet. I would be more than happy if I could find a work environment as good as the one antimal gave us for our PhD, an exciting project in great research groups, but above all else, a wonderful group of people.

Current position: looking for one...

E-mail: kikomarti@hotmail.com

Patrice Mimche

Thesis defense: Apr. 2010, Milan



Patrice at his work place at Emory University

After leaving the AntiMal programme the next step was obviously to find a post-doctoral position although it took me about 10 months to find one, during which period I was enjoying the time I could spend with my family and friends in Cameroon.

On March 15, I started a postdoctoral training in Dr Tracey Lamb's lab at Emory University in Atlanta and I hope this position will be rewarding for me, both personally and professionally. I continue to work on malaria immunology and this is a nice addition to my PhD training which was on drug-mediated immunomodulation in malaria.



Patrice's daughter Christina being carried by her grand-mother when she was visiting in London...

Changes since Oct. 2006: 3rd child Christina born on 9 Sept. 2009

Current position: Postdoc at Emory University, Atlanta

Contact details: Division of Pediatrics Infectious Diseases, Emory University Medical School, 2015 Uppergate Drive, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30322, TEL: +1 404-727-9134

E-mail: Patrice.mimche@emory.edu

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LAST BUT NOT LEAST

I hope you have enjoyed the information provided in this 1st (and perhaps not last) alumni newsletter issue. Before closing I would like to take this opportunity to send a huge thank you to our students for their commitment, the PIs for their continuous support and the AntiMal office for their overall help during the past years.

I really appreciate having had the opportunity to be part of this Programme and I very much hope that we can stay in touch with „our“ students.

THANK YOU! ☺

Kind regards,

Miriam Griesheimer
(AntiMal PhD Programme administrator)



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CURRENT PHD PROGRAMMES

While the AntiMal PhD Programme has come to an end new PhD Programmes funded by the European Commission are still ongoing:

InterMalTraining (Marie Curie Training Network), coordinated by Dr. Michael Blackman at the NIMR, London, UK.



- ❖ 14 PhD students as of January 2009
- ❖ www.nimr.mrc.ac.uk/phd/intermaltraining/
- ❖ contact: Ms Nathalie Modjeska
(Nathalie.Modjeska@univ-montp2.fr, Tel. +33-(0)4 67 14 37 43)

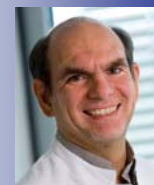
EVIMalaR PhD Programme (funded as part of the Network of Excellence EVIMalaR), coordinated by Prof. Michael Lanzer at Heidelberg University Medical School, Germany.



- ❖ 1st cohort of 10 students as of October 2010
- ❖ 2nd cohort of 12 students as of October 2011
- ❖ www.klinikum.uni-heidelberg.de/EVIMalaR-PhD-Programme.115126.0.html
- ❖ contact: Ms Alessia Valdarno
(EVIMalaR.PhD@med.uni-heidelberg.de, Tel. +49-(0)6221-567855)

SPOTLIGHT (the PhD Progr. Team)

Prof. Dr. Michael Lanzer
Chair of the AntiMal PhD Programme



CV:

- 1999 – present
Full Professor and Head of Department of Parasitology, University of Heidelberg
- 1994 – 1998
Junior Group Leader, Res. Center for Infectious Diseases, Univ. of Würzburg
- 1988 – 1993
Postdoc, Sloan-Kettering Institute, New York, USA.
- 1985 – 1988
PhD, Center for Molecular Biology, University of Heidelberg
- 1984 – 1985
Diploma Thesis, Hoffman LaRoche und Co. AG, Basel, Switzerland
- 1979 – 1984
Biology School, University of Heidelberg

Coordinating functions:

- 2010 – present
Chair of the EVIMalaR PhD Programme
- 2008 – present
Chair of the European Malaria Graduate School
- 2007 – present
Coordinator of the local Graduate School HBIGS
- 2006 – 2010
Chair of the AntiMal PhD Programme
- 2005 – present
Coordinator of the MD/PhD programme at Heidelberg University

Miriam Griesheimer
AntiMal PhD Programme Administrator

CV:

- 2003 – present
Secretary to Prof. Lanzer, Heidelberg University Med. School
- 2000 – 2002
Training as multilingual secretary
- 2000
A-levels