

I arrived in Sydney on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, completely in awe of how stunning and exciting this city is, and now that I am leaving, I am still just as in awe as I was that first day. Ten weeks goes by too quickly, but I am glad that I had that much time to devote to living and working in another country; by the end I felt like I wasn't a tourist, but a resident. It has been a tremendous experience getting to know another culture (surprisingly, far different than American culture), seeing amazing spectacles of nature, experiencing another nation's approach to healthcare, and, of course, doing research that I feel is very important.

Sydneysiders (as the city residents call themselves) share a different paradigm on life than American's in the northeast. There is a pervasive understanding in Australia that all work should be accompanied with just as much time spent having a life outside of your work. That being said, I found Aussies to be extremely communal, and team-oriented. It was a little daunting at first to be confronted with a culture that shunned the individualism American's pride themselves on, but I think the nature of Australian bonding over the "barbie" has rubbed off on me, and it has added a new dimension to what I want in my future work environment, or the type of community I would like to create if I were to run my own lab one day. There is a great sentiment of sharing and help among colleagues, and I was hard-pressed to find a "gunner" nature among the University of Sydney medical students.

As for my research, I think I gained invaluable experience doing translational research that was examining the effects of a novel immunosuppressive peptide and delivery method in treating rheumatoid arthritis in an *in vivo* rat model. In addition to this more clinical side of research, I also participated in the rheumatology rounds, medical student workshops, and went to weekly grand rounds. On the basic science end, I also performed cell culture work in order to quantitate the effectiveness of our immunosuppressive peptide, worked in collaboration with radiology to perform imaging studies on our rat arthritis model, and am writing a review paper on targeting peptides in liposomes (our delivery method). The most important part of all of this, though, was really getting to understand how an experiment goes from concept to conclusion, and grappling with the various unforeseeable problems that occur along the way. I am leaving very satisfied in knowing that my research will be published once we have completed a few more imaging studies and have finished analyzing the data, and that if I dedicate myself to this review paper, I may have another publication from that. I could not ask for anything more from a summer's work.

Living in Sydney has been a wonderful experience, and I am very glad that I came here. In the past ten weeks I have done work that I think really matters, had an incredible time touring the city, meeting the people, and, of course, hitting the beaches, but I have also come face-to-face with different world paradigms and have seen first-hand the issues that affect a fairly new nation that is opening up to more immigration, such as racism, ethnic riots,

terrorism, and inequality of healthcare, education, and living. It is an amazing juxtaposition when one compares these awful (yet ubiquitous) things to beauty of the city, and the general friendliness of its citizens. Nevertheless, I sincerely appreciated the opportunity to live and work in Sydney, and I believe that I learned invaluable lessons from my time abroad.