Young Scientist Day 2015
Wednesday 4th March

The annual Young Scientist Day 2015 took place on Wednesday 4th March in the Wolfson Education Centre. The event was a great success, attracting a large number of PhD students and also a handful of MSc and MRes students, one of whom was inspired to run a similar event in his own cohort.

The morning was dedicated to poster presentations, with participants enjoying a wide range of posters from all 5 Divisions. Our three winners were:

1. Natalie Johnston: Optical interrogation of glucose-regulated beta cell connectivity
2. Luke Moore: Surveillance to stewardship: bridging the gap for antimicrobial resistance
3. Ryan Mitchell: Reciprocal changes in glucose tolerance after pancreatic beta cell-selective over-expression or deletion of Slc30a8/ZnT8 in mice

The afternoon saw an impressive suite of ‘3-minute thesis’ presentations, with one PhD student from each Section Cohort challenged to communicate their research effectively in just 3 minutes. The overall prize was awarded to Nisha Ranganathan for her presentation ‘Why killing 99% of bacteria isn’t enough’, with a runner-up of Jonathan Underwood, who spoke about ‘How antiretrovirals affect the brain’. Nisha and Jonathan will progress to the 3-minute thesis competition at the College-wide Graduate School Summer Symposium in June.
We also enjoyed stimulating talks from three Department of Medicine Postdocs, which was a new feature for 2015. They provided some useful and good-humoured advice about PhDs, Postdocs and careers and PhD students enjoyed the opportunity to network during the drinks which rounded off the day.

Another new feature was a visit by 11 secondary school students from the Misbourne School, Buckinghamshire. Dr. Pascal Durrenberger, a Research Associate within Brain Sciences, has been leading an outreach project with the school’s STEM club, and the students enjoyed a varied day presenting their poster about brain waves, using microscopes and touring the Imanova Imaging Centre. Academics and PhD students made a real effort to engage the students.

Dr. Jonathan Underwood and Dr. Pascal Durrenberger engaging Misbourne School students

Poster judging and mingling
The event would not have been possible without the generous support of the Graduate School, who provided funding for refreshments and also for the prizes. Young Scientist Day is a perfect example of the ‘cohort-building’ activity that the Graduate School seeks to support. We are also grateful to Dr. Kevin Murphy, Dr. Jane Saffell and to a number of other academics and Postdocs who gave up their time to act as judges for the poster and presentation sessions.

We look forward to planning Young Scientist Day 2016!