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Semi-Annual Report

During the last six months I had the chance of developing and improving a variety of skills such as communication, organization, data analysis, experimental design, project management and problems solving. These skills have been extremely valuable in terms of career development.

In the past year, I have conducted animal experiments to evaluate the effects of dioxin exposure during different critical windows of mammary development. These experiments have focused on mammary cell proliferation and differentiation and led to a manuscript entitled "Activation of the aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AhR) during different critical windows in pregnancy alters mammary epithelial cell proliferation and differentiation," which was accepted on May 26th 2009 for publication in Toxicological Sciences. I also co-authored a paper that was accepted on Feb. 13th, 2009 by Journal of Reproductive Toxicology titled "TCDD exposure disrupts mammary epithelial cell differentiation and function."

In addition, I had the chance to participate in the 48th Annual Meeting of the Society of Toxicology, presenting a poster entitled: "Activation of the aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AhR) during pregnancy impairs mammary epithelial cell differentiation through direct and indirect actions." During this meeting, I was also awarded with the SOT Women In Toxicology outstanding postdoctoral award for academic achievement, leadership and service.

Later this month, I will be participating in the Gordon Research Conference - Mammary Gland Biology that will take place on June 14-19, 2009 at Salve Regina University, Newport, RI. This conference will be a great opportunity to learn more about mammary stem cell biology and breast cancer.

Besides the professional labor (“on the bench”), I had the chance of actively working with the Society of Toxicology as their Postdoctoral Assembly vice-chair (2008-2009) and chair (2009-2010). I also participated in the World Wide Web (WWW) task force to reformat the toxicology website.

I would like to clarify that in every presentation I gave and on the paper that was submitted and accepted, there is an acknowledgement to the Art beCAUSE Foundation for the Seed the Scientist Award that has given me the opportunity to develop my new research project entitled “In Utero Exposure to TCDD and Development of Breast Cancer” and my career development in general.

Publication history since Oct. 2008:

Lew, B.J.; Collins, L.C.; Lawrence, B.P. Activation of the aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AhR) during different critical windows in pregnancy alters mammary epithelial cell proliferation and differentiation. Accepted (05/27/2009), Toxicological Science.

Collins, L. L.; **Lew, B.J.;** Lawrence, B. P. TCDD exposure disrupts mammary epithelial cell differentiation and function Reproductive Toxicology 28 (2009) 11–17.

Conferences and presentations since Oct. 2008:

Lew, B.J.; Winans, B.N.; Lawrence, B.P. Activation of the aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AhR) during pregnancy impairs mammary epithelial cell differentiation through direct and indirect actions. Presented at The 48th. Annual Meeting of the Society of Toxicology, March 15-19, 2009, Baltimore, MD USA.

Awards since Oct. 2008:

- SOT Women in Toxicology: Outstanding Postdoctoral Award for academic achievement, leadership and service (March, 2009);