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EBNet Travel Bursary Support
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Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) 43rd Annual Meeting, 13-17 November 2022

Presentation title:

'Understanding Fate and Distribution of Antimicrobial Compounds and Antimicrobial Resistance Genes in Wastewater Treatment'

Authors: Charlotte Head *et al.*

In November 2022, I was given the opportunity to attend and present at the SETAC 43rd Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA, USA. This has been an incredible and unforgettable experience, which was not only my first time visiting the United States, but my first time attending and presenting at a major international conference. I am currently in the second year of my PhD at the University of York, England. My research focuses on the prevalence and dissemination of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial compounds throughout the process of wastewater treatment, with a particular focus on the dried biosolid by-product. This conference was an opportunity to showcase my research, whilst also learning from fellow researchers in similar fields.

Whilst at the conference, I was able to attend seminars and presentations, as well as industry-led sessions and workshops. I was also able to speak to industry professionals in an exposition-like setting and speak individually with poster presenters at the poster sessions. This combination has allowed me to gain knowledge, build bridges and expand my professional network. Some of the research topics I found particularly interesting included pharmaceutical exposure in non-target organisms, and pharmaceuticals in aquatic environments.

I was given the opportunity to present in the session titled "Innovative Analytical Approaches for Understanding Environmental Contaminants of Emerging Concern". Here I gave a platform presentation on my PhD research project. In all of the sessions I attended, the presentations were of a really high quality, given by speakers who are all active researchers in the field, either in academia, policy or industry.

The main thing I have gained from attending this conference has been the opportunity to network with other early career researchers with similar interests to mine, and this will impact my career as I have built bridges with researchers based in the USA and Canada, where there may be opportunities for future research collaborations. I was also able to attend mixers such as the student-mentor dinner where I met people who worked for organisations like the Environmental Protection Agency, and industry-based laboratories. Furthermore, the chance to speak to exhibitors at the conference has opened pathways for possible career opportunities, including many industrial sponsors, often based worldwide.

This was the first conference I have had the opportunity to attend, and was a thoroughly enriching experience, for which I am grateful I was able to go. I look forward to future events where I can discuss my research with other likeminded colleagues.



Charlotte Head at SETAC