

AIMMS 2016 Annual Meeting: successful celebration of joined forces

On Thursday 14 April, the 2016 annual meeting of the Amsterdam Institute for Molecules, Medicines and Systems took place. This year the meeting was entitled 'Joining forces'.

Over 200 staff members, post-docs, PhD, Master's and Bachelor students registered for the event. Interesting presentations by senior scientists were followed by the first Karlijn Keijzer award ceremony in the morning. The afternoon session commenced with a poster competition and an oral communication competition between six AIMMS PhD-students. A guest lecture by external speaker Theo Meert (Janssen Pharmaceutica) and the award ceremony by Prof. Karen Maex completed the diverse programme.

Opening

The 2016 annual meeting was opened by AIMMS director prof. Nico Vermeulen, who briefly introduced AIMMS and the programme of the day. He elaborated on the importance of translational research, collaboration amongst the researchers of the science faculties of the VU and UvA, and the recent relocation of AIMMS researchers to the O|2 building.

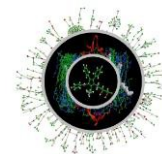


Human Life Sciences lectures

The first lecture was given by prof. dr Tom Grossmann, new Professor in Organic Chemistry within the department of Chemistry & Pharmaceutical Sciences. He gave a summary of three research topics on the design of ligands targeting protein-protein interactions. Dr Sanne Abeln (Integrative Bioinformatics) continued, with a presentation on extracting data in science on a big scale. She pinpointed the importance of data-sharing for correct big-scale research. Afterwards, the floor was for Dr Marja Lamoree (Institute for Environmental Studies, VU), who explained innovations in environmental toxicity testing with High-throughput Effect-Directed Analysis for use in toxicity determination. The concluding speaker in the morning session was prof. dr Iwan de Esch (Biocomputational Chemistry for Drug Innovation) who talked about creating the next generation of allergy medicines for clinical use. and showed that fragment library screening via the Chemical Biology Platform is a promising way to find the parts to create a selectively effective drug.

Karlijn Keijzer Scriptieprijs 2015

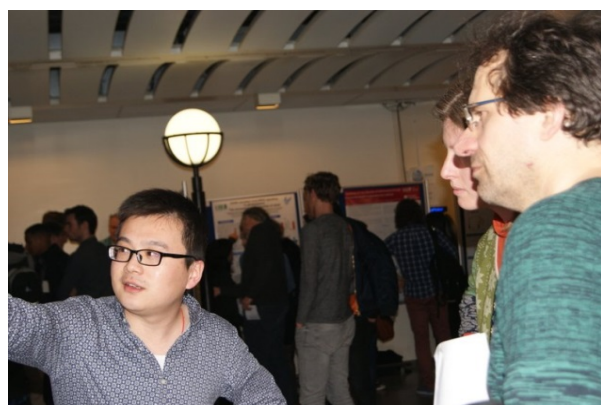
The *Karlijn Keijzer Scriptieprijs* is established in memory of Karlijn Keijzer, who was aboard the fatal MH17 flight in July 2014. In line with Karlijn's intellectual legacy and interests, and to stimulate other talented and ambitious students in their scientific development and (international) experience, the



prize will be presented annually as a travel grant of 1000 €. The first Karlijn Keijzer Scriptieprijs was awarded to Lizeth Haveman, who recently finished her BSc studies in Pharmaceutical Sciences *cum laude*. In an inspiring and touching ceremony, Karlijn's mother Jacqueline Keijzer awarded Lizeth after presenting her research on the synthesis and radiolabeling of H3R ligands for investigating dynamic signaling.

Poster competition

During the lunch break all AIMMS researchers had the opportunity to present a poster. A total of 43 AIMMS post-docs, PhD and Master's students presented their latest scientific discoveries and discussed these with their colleagues. The AIMMS poster jury –consisting of senior researchers– selected the three best posters and their presenters.



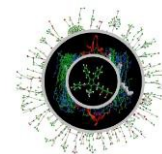
Oral communication competition

The afternoon session started with the oral communication competition between AIMMS PhD-students. Each of the six contestants had 10 minutes to explain their research to the audience, followed by 5 minutes for discussion. The presentations were ranked by the audience through electronic voting at the end of the session.

Reggie Bosma (Medicinal Chemistry) kicked off with a presentation about long residence antihistamines and how they can be used to discover new drugs for allergies. Kerstin Wallraven (Organic Chemistry) explained how to constrain irregular peptide structure through hydrocarbon cross-links, and its importance in protein-protein interaction. Stefan Dekker (Molecular Toxicology) continued on discovering the risk-factors involved in Nevirapine metabolites, followed by Dina Lakayan (Analytical Chemistry) who explained how highly selective antibody-affinity profiling is done, and its applications in targeted drug therapies. Niclas Nordholt (Systems Bioinformatics) updated the audience on his research on the *Bacillus Subtilis* growth and protein expression. The session was finalised by Trang Phan (Molecular Microbiology) who presented her research on the Tuberculosis type VII secretion system.

Keynote lecture and award winners

Prof. dr Theo Meert from Janssen Pharmaceutica in Beerse, Belgium was our guest speaker. He elaborated on the recent developments in European drug discovery. Referring a.o. to the presentation by Sanne Abeln in the morning, he demonstrated the importance of bioinformatics and showed that future scientists with a strong background in bioinformatics are key to processing or understanding big data.



Then it was time to announce the prize winners of the annual meeting. The prizes were handed out by Prof. Karen Maex, dean of FEW and FALW of the VU University and FNWI of the UvA.

The poster prizes were awarded to three PhD students who accompanied their clear, high quality posters, by an excellent presentation. In random order, the winners were (i) Tamara Mocking (Medicinal Chemistry) with *A BRET-based kinetic ligand-receptor binding assay for the histamine H3 receptor*, (ii) Yongjie Zhang (Molecular Toxicology) with *Characterization of human cytochrome P450 mediated bioactivation of amodiaquine and its major metabolite N-desethylamodiaquine*, and (iii) Timo de Groof (Medicinal Chemistry) with *Identification and characterization of viral GPCR- targeting nanobodies*. All three received a €200 contribution to spend on a conference of their choice.



The oral presentation prize was awarded to Stefan Dekker (Molecular Toxicology) for his presentation *Different reactive metabolites of nevirapine require distinct glutathione S-transferase isoforms for bio-inactivation*. In addition to the €600 contribution for attending a scientific conference, he will represent AIMMS at the FIGON Dutch Medicines Days early October in Ede. Reggie Bosma was chosen as runner-up and will represent AIMMS at the VUmc Wetenschapsdag on 30 September this year. Master's student Maroeska Burggraaff was awarded the prize for the best contribution to the plenary discussion.

The last words were for AIMMS director prof. Nico Vermeulen, who thanked the audience for their contributions to a marvelous 6th annual meeting. The meeting concluded with a Spanish buffet dinner and drinks served by study association VCSVU. Altogether, it was a very pleasant and scientifically interesting day, showing the diversity and added value of translational research, i.e. from molecule to patient, conducted within AIMMS and related groups.

The management team of AIMMS would like to thank all attendees for their presence and contribution and looks forward to meeting all of you again at next year's Annual Meeting.

