The International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) and Vision Sciences Society (VSS)

13th – 20th May, Salt Lake City, Utah and Tampa, Florida

Both the International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) and Vision Sciences Society (VSS) are the largest annual autism and vision research meetings respectively. IMFAR attracts both academic researchers (spanning from psychologists, neuroscientists) and clinicians. VSS has an audience of academic researchers from psychophysics, neuroscience, computer science and cognitive science. The conferences took place between 13th and 20th of May in Salt Lake City and Tampa respectively.

My PhD project is multidisciplinary as it investigates colour perception in autism and Williams Syndrome, and as such spans both vision and developmental/clinical research areas. As a result it can be difficult to choose which meetings are best to present my work. By being able to combine both IMFAR and VSS conferences I was able to go to separate conferences on both autism (IMFAR) and vision (VSS).

At both conferences I was able to present posters of my work (IMFAR poster title: Colour Perception in Autism Spectrum Disorders and Williams Syndrome. VSS poster title: Dissociation of chromatic discrimination ability in Autism Spectrum Disorder and Williams Syndrome). Through this opportunity I was able to discuss my results with a wide range of professionals. This enabled me to get feedback on my current work and how it can be potentially expanded upon and applied to a variety of contexts, something that will prove invaluable when writing up my thesis.

At both conferences I attended oral and poster presentations from both world leading and early career researcher. I was also able attend workshops on funding applications that were designed for the PhD students and early career researchers, as well as lunches with key note speakers. I used this opportunity to network with other researchers and create a research strategy that I will utilise in my future career.

I would like to thank the Faculty of Medical Sciences for awarding me this travel grant which has enabled to me to cover the majority of my costs of going to both conferences.