

Master Internship at the Children's Hospital Los Angeles

Ursula Kreuser

As part of my master studies, I conducted an eight months internship at the Children's Hospital Los Angeles at the University of Southern California. In the lab of Dr. Laura Perin I was involved in a project on the effect of diseased decellularized kidney matrix on the immune response mediated by macrophages.

Dr. Perin's group is quite small and everybody was very friendly from the first day on. Basically, she treats her lab like her own little family, which was not only a nice working environment, but also helpful as I felt a little bit lost in this huge city where I did not know anybody. I enjoyed working on my project with my daily supervisor Dr. Astgik Petrosyan, who taught me a wide variety of new techniques and helped me with all problem I encountered along the way. The project was very



exciting, as it studied the possibility of using decellularized kidney matrix from discarded human donor kidneys for regenerative medicine purposes. We investigated the effect of diseased kidney matrix on macrophage polarization, to understand how the immune response towards diseased matrix differs from the response to healthy matrix. The environment in the group was especially stimulating, as it is a very international group. Not only

could I learn a lot about different cultures, but also everybody had understanding for being new in an unknown city and everybody did their best to make me feel home.

Life outside the lab was not as easy in the beginning, as it took me some time to get used to Los Angeles and especially its enormous size. The long commute to work was tiring after a while, which was why I decided to look for another room. Moving in Los Angeles is a challenge, but after a few weeks of searching I finally found a nice room in a very lively neighborhood close to the hospital. Of course I decided to move on the only day of pouring rain, which was certainly a unique event in Los Angeles. My roommate and her very friendly cat quickly took me up in their little family, which made me feel a lot more home in Los Angeles.



I also made a lot of friends, especially through the J1-scholar program of USC, which helped to meet other international research scholars. Together, we went on a lot of trips to the different national



parks in and around California. The wide variety of nature in California is simply breathtaking. From superbloom in Death Valley, an amazing variety of flowers in the middle of the desert and hottest place on earth, to bears in Sequoia National Park, dolphins in Malibu and a snowball fight in Yosemite National Park (in June!), California has it all. Within only a few hours it is possible to go from the exciting mega city Los Angeles to the middle of nowhere without cell phone reception but all the more stunning views. These contrasts and all the possibilities connected are what I learned to love most about Los Angeles. I met

great people and made many friends from all around the world, which made me enjoy my time in California even more.