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ACVIM Forum 2014, Nashville, Tennessee

The American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM) Forum is the annual conference featuring the latest research and clinical information from international veterinary researchers and clinical specialists. The scientific programme of research abstracts is the most highly regarded of any veterinary conference and benefits from communication with both groups of attendees.

My PhD is focused on the investigation of endothelial function in horses and its role in predisposition to laminitis, a crippling disease of equine feet. There is currently no way to measure endothelial function non-invasively in horses so the first aim of my PhD is to investigate techniques to measure endothelial function in the horse. Since there are many similarities between the risk factors for laminitis and those for cardiovascular disease in humans, it is possible that endothelial dysfunction may play a role in the predisposition to this disease.

The second aim of my PhD is to investigate whether endothelial function is impaired in animals predisposed to laminitis. I submitted two abstracts to present aspects of my work at the conference; 'Assessment of non-invasive methods for measurement of endothelial function in the horse' and 'Seasonal variation in blood nitrite concentration in previously laminitic and non-laminitic ponies'. Both abstracts were accepted as poster presentations and the Society of Biology Travel Grant allowed me to travel to the conference to present my posters.

The posters were well received and provoked some useful discussion about the current research in this field. The conference also featured several talks and abstract presentations directly related to my field of research so it was a very useful experience. As well as presenting my posters I was invited to speak at a special interest group focused on equine endocrinology; it was a privilege to talk in more detail about my research to the leaders in the field. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Society of Biology for their support.

No visitor to Nashville could escape country music, particularly not in my case as the Country Music Awards Festival was taking place at the same time as the conference. There was an abundance of Stetsons, cowboy boots and a huge range of country music audible around every corner of the city!

Below are a few photos to illustrate:

