

South Africa - Italy GYA-YSAP MISSION - 17 November 2020

GYA Member from South Africa (Developing country partner)

Prof. Pradeep Kumar
Associate Professor: Pharmaceutics
Global Young Academy Member (2020-)
Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
E: pradeep.kumar@wits.ac.za | T: +27-79-584-5643

GYA Member from Italy (Developed country partner)

Prof. Dr. Filippo Rossi
Associate Professor
Global Young Academy Member (2019-)
Department of Chemistry, Materials and Chemical Engineering "Giulio Natta" |
Politecnico di Milano | via Mancinelli 7 | 20131 Milano (Italy)
phone: +39 0223993145 | cell phone: +39 3382079020
Email: filippo.rossi@polimi.it

Budget requested: 150.00 Euros (for joint pizza or catering as per availability).

Budget claimed: 0.00 Euros

No. of participating students from South Africa: 6 (4 presented + 2 additional attended)

Kate Da Silva (Master student)
Taskeen Sarwan (Master student)
Henna Cassimjee (Master student)
Gillian Mahumane (PhD student)
Hillary Mndlovu (PhD student – in presence)
Michelle Lategan (Master student – in presence)

No. of participating students from Italy: 6 (5 presented + 1 additional attended)

Asama Mazhar (Master student)
Anna Maspes (Master student)
Filippo Pinelli (PhD student)
Fabio Pizzetti (PhD student)
Elisa Lacroce (Junior Research Fellow)
Ariana Rossetti (in presence)

Mission Program

10:00-10:15 Introduction of the meeting (Filippo and Pradeep)
10:15-10:35 Filippo: intro of university and research activities of the research group in Italy
10:40-11:00 Pradeep: intro of university and research activities of the research group in South Africa
11:00-12:30 5-minute Rapid student presentations (5 Italy + 4 South Africa).

12:30 – Closing remarks.

Brief report

The mission started with a brief introduction of the GYA-YSAP mission by the GYA members followed by a detailed account of their respective universities, national status of the university, individual research profile and interests. In addition, latest and leading research findings including publications and patents were provided and discussed. From Filippo's research group, the students presented different applications of biomaterials like a biphasic colloidal system termed as BIJEL (bicontinuous interfacially jammed emulsion gel) and different functionalized colloidal systems. From the South African side; the students presented various biomaterial platforms for neurotrauma intervention including thermogels, 3D printed scaffolds, proteosaccharide complexes, and 3-in-1 nanofibrous cryogels. The closing part included potential lab visits and applying for bilateral funding call to augment the research work being done by the teams. Here are some responses from the participants:

"Being invited to participate in the South Africa-Italy GYA YSAP mission was an absolute privilege as I was able to represent both my department and country. In my experience, the collection of research conducted on trauma injuries presents with highly variable outcomes due to the array of injury mechanisms. As such, I found it incredibly interesting to see how different university departments are tackling different trauma related injuries with innovative ideas and solutions. It was rewarding to see South Africa's contribution in attempting to provide a solution to trauma injuries. Furthermore, it was encouraging to see that the standard of work being conducted in South Africa was comparable to that of international standards. Additionally, the GYA YSAP mission provided an engaging platform and opportunity for students to network and learn from each other. Lastly, the allure of collaborating with the team from Italy is exciting and it's an opportunity in which I hope to be included."

Kate Da Silva – Masters Candidate (Wits University)

"I had found this experience very informative and mentally stimulating. The work presented by other researchers was outstanding and broadened my scientific horizon. From this experience, I learnt valuable presentation skills due to this being my first presentation and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity that I had to interact with other scientists and share my work."

Henna Cassimjee – Masters Candidate (Wits University)

"It was an amazing experience being able to learn about projects that fellow researchers are undertaking in other parts of the world and being exposed to current research in the field and developing biotechnologies. I was a bit nervous as this was my first time presenting to an audience, however, I learnt a lot from this experience and am truly grateful for having been given this wonderful opportunity!"

Taskeen Sarwan – Masters Candidate (Wits University)

"It was a great experience attending the online meeting hosted by the Global Young Academy in sponsorship of the Young Scientist Ambassador Programme (YSAP) on the 17 of November 2020. I met intelligent and eager international colleagues doing very interesting work. Personally I think this conference was very well organized and very successful. I like the fact that it was intimate, it felt like a group setting and comfortable. I got introduced to new concepts such as "bijels" and was exposed to new research areas and networking possibilities. Getting a tour of the other research group's facilities was also an exciting privilege. I highly recommend more collaborative opportunities like, these, it is through these unique experiences that we get to not only measure the quality of work we do on an international stage, but also have the privilege of sharing efforts in the presence of willing and engaged people. Thank you very much for this experience. I hope it continues to grow in popularity and impact."

Gillian Mahumane – PhD Candidate (Wits University)

"It was a pleasure to participate at this conference and meet the colleagues from South Africa. I had the opportunity to show my thesis project and learn from the other researchers new materials with different

applications in the medical field. I found all projects very interesting and challenging. I think that conferences like this can give rise to brilliant new ideas and projects as well as possible collaborations. Therefore, I hope that this opportunity continues.”

Elisa Lacroce – Junior Research Fellow (Politecnico di Milano)

“The opportunity we had during the meeting hosted by the Global Young Academy in sponsorship of the Young Scientist Ambassador Programme (YSAP) has been very interesting and stimulating. In fact on one side, I had the possibility to share my research activities, discussing about my latest experiments and results. By the other side, the meeting was a great opportunity to get in touch with people from another university and another country that have a different background and that were able to share with us their knowledge and their fields of interests in academic research. That day has been a great possibility to have comparisons and to deepen knowledge in our research fields.”

Filippo Pinelli – PhD Candidate (Politecnico di Milano)

"The online meeting hosted by the Global Young Academy on the 17th of November 2020 was a very interesting and amazing experience. I was able to meet young and determined people explaining their works and research activities. I personally think that this was a very useful “online meeting”, in particular for young researchers, giving the opportunity to experience an oral communication on their own scientific activities without feeling the “pressure” of a symposium. I was also able to learn and be introduced to concepts I was new about. Furthermore, I think that this method will help growing new and existing collaborations between different research groups spread around the world. I would like to thank you for letting me join you in this amazing experience, I hope that this will continue growing in popularity and will be proposed again.

Fabio Pizzetti – PhD Candidate (Politecnico di Milano)