

Talented emerging scientist.. Svitlana Kurinna



1. How did you become interested in research relating to your area?

We stumbled upon miRs as novel regulators of skin homeostasis during my postdoctoral training in Sabine Werner group, ETH Zurich. I did extensive chromatin immunoprecipitations using mouse and human epidermis tissue and found miR-29s as target genes of the cytoprotective factor NRF2

2. Describe your research & the program/lab that you are in?

My newly formed group is focusing on the role and regulation of miRNAs in skin repair. The plan is to utilize modified antisense oligonucleotides for efficient delivery, tracking, and downregulation of miRNAs function in cultured primary cells and in mice in vivo. We also establish miRNA crosslinking and immunoprecipitation (miR-CLIP) to identify new RNAs regulating growth and differentiation of cells essential for the improvement of cutaneous regeneration.

3. What makes you unique – why, of all applicants, do you think YOU got funded?

I spent many years learning good biochemistry techniques, in parallel acquiring training in regenerative and developmental biology. Layered upon my earlier experience in cancer therapeutics, and reinforced by excellent recommendations from my PhD and postdoctoral supervisors, it gave me confidence that I will be the best candidate for the type of novel projects that interest MRC.

4. Obviously it depends on the project, but in addition to this how much do you think is dependent on the presentation you did and the place in which you are doing the project?

It is very difficult to say because I do not know how many applicants got rejected at different stages of the selection. But I think the panel would reject even a better proposal if they noticed lack of confidence and poor knowledge of the research field during the interview.

5. Describe your unforgettable (proudest) moment in science, and the most challenging situation that you have had to overcome (lessons learnt) so far?

Unforgettable - my PhD defence: My supervisor and our group threw a surprise party and brought me home in a car full of cupcakes and flowers! Challenging – to discover I had a wrong genotype bred into the mouse colony that I already used for a big experiment! My PhD advisor reacted so well, and taught me an unforgettable lesson of remaining calm and making the best out of the worst.

6. Where is your biggest stress at this stage of your career?

Starting a new group in a new research environment while moving and adjusting to new people, new city, and new country.

7. What area(s) do you wish to specialise in in the future?

I would like to stretch molecular biology to diagnose and treat diseases that escape the mainroute pharma.

8. What would be your advice for talented emerging scientists?

Criticise the data not people.