

ISTRY NEWSLETTER

International Society for Tryptophan Research

PRESIDENT ADDRESS FROM A/PROF STEFANO COMAI

Dear Colleagues, friends and ISTRY Members,

It is an honour for me to be elected President of this prestigious scientific society, which has been home to the most influential and world-renowned scientists in the field of tryptophan and its metabolism. It was also a great pleasure to reconnect in person with many of you at the recent ISTRY meeting in Jena, especially after the challenges posed by the pandemic. This highly successful event, for which we extend our gratitude to Prof. Florian Zepf and his team, facilitated an engaging exchange of ideas and highlighted the latest advancements in tryptophan research across a range of fields, including neuroscience, cancer, immunology, aging, analytical chemistry and metabolic disorders.

Looking ahead, together with the 2024-2026 ISTRY Executive Committee (see page 3 for details) we are excited to begin organizing our next meeting, which will take place in 2026 in Padova. I will have more specific details for the beginning of 2025. In the interim, we aim to stay connected by hosting a series of short webinars. We will consider different time zones to accommodate our global membership and will record these sessions to ensure that those members who cannot attend live can still benefit offline from the presentations. Additionally, we are exploring collaborative initiatives with other scientific societies. I have recently initiated discussions with our "sister" organization, the International Society for Serotonin Research, as there may be valuable scientific synergies between our fields that we can explore together. Another important aspect I would like to address is the potential of developing our own scientific journal. I believe that establishing a dedicated journal for our society would greatly enhance our ability to disseminate research and advance the field of tryptophan research. To this end, we are in the process of connecting with SAGE, the publisher of the International Journal of Tryptophan Research, to explore the possibility of a close collaboration with the journal.

In today's digital age, being active on social media is crucial for disseminating scientific knowledge and engaging with the broader community. Effective use of these platforms helps us highlight our events, share new scientific insights, and keep our members connected. To enhance our presence and outreach, we are particularly interested in involving junior members who are enthusiastic about contributing to our media efforts. The ISTRY Media Team supervised by our ISTRY secretary Prof. Lim has done an excellent job over the past years in maintaining as much as possible our online presence and promoting the latest advancements in tryptophan metabolism. We invite junior members to join this dynamic team and help us further strengthen our communication and engagement strategies across social media and the web. We are committed to fostering an active and inclusive community and eagerly anticipate your participation in these upcoming initiatives and collaborations. If you have any ideas, initiatives, or would simply like us to promote your latest research through our media channels, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Your contributions and feedback are invaluable as we work together to advance our field and keep our society vibrant and engaged.

I thank you for your continued support and engagement, and I wish you the best of success in your upcoming tryptophan research.

Yours Sincerely,

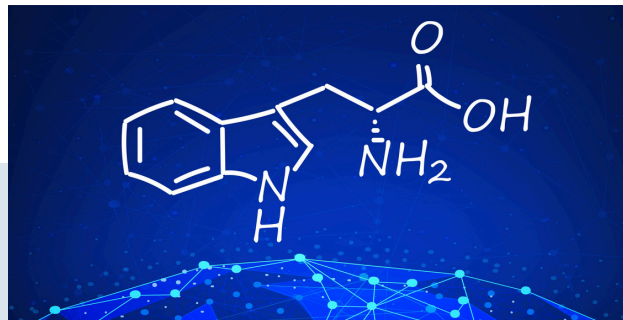
Associate Professor Stefano Comai
President of ISTRY

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ISTRY Media Team Conference Highlights

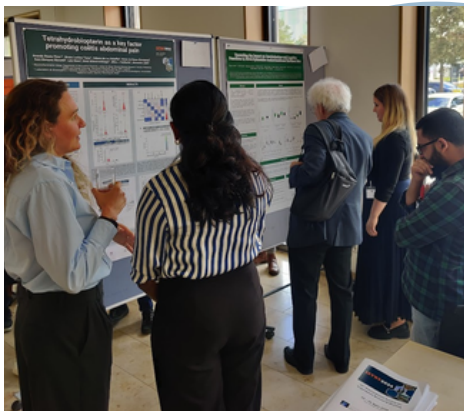
ISTRY 2024 Conference Overview

Researcher Highlight from Emeritus Professor Graziella Allegri



MEDIA TEAM PERSPECTIVES: ISTRY 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Written by Lorraine Tan and Samara Walpole, ISTRY Media Team Members



Over 90 delegates from around the world (encompassing USA, Brazil, UK, Europe, South Africa, Japan, Australia and New Zealand) came together in the beautiful city of Jena, Germany for the 16th meeting of ISTRY. Jena is home to the big MNC of optics, Zeiss, Friedrich-Schiller University and Jena University Hospital, who hosted the ISTRY meeting.

Some highlights from our ISTRY media team (pictured center top line) included the breadth of novel and unpublished research findings that were shared. This expanded our knowledge on tryptophan research across disciplines, from exercise science with implications for translational research (with thanks to presenters Prof. Philipp Zimmer and Dr Niklas Joisten from the Technical University Dortmund), to novel insights at the level of the aryl hydrocarbon receptor with implications for glioblastoma treatment, presented by the German Cancer Research Centre. This was well balanced by Prof. Robert Schwarz's thought-provoking Keynote presentation, reflecting on the history of KYNA research spanning across psychiatry, neurobiology, pathology, biochemistry and cognition.

A unique and exciting aspect of the conference, particularly as first-time attendees, was to see the jovial banter between long-time ISTRY members, and the positive interactions they shared with early career researchers and students. Having the opportunity to meet and talk with some of the pioneers of tryptophan research was invaluable for us as researchers. The positive community of the ISTRY group was particularly highlighted during the Conference Dinner celebrations, which was the perfect opportunity to drink, indulge in German cultural dishes such as goulash and potato dumplings (also who could forget the chocolate fountain!). Overall, the ISTRY conference was a warm and inviting space that was a hub of new ideas, discussion and collaboration.

We are looking forward to ISTRY 2026 in Padova and encourage fellow members as well as those who may have missed out this year to join us! Meanwhile keep updated with our online activities/updates, featured articles and webinars (next one in 4th quarter of the year). We are also expecting to see a few new faces joining us in the ISTRY media team. Stay tuned!

ISTRY 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

ISTRY 2024-2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



ISTRY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2024 - 2026

President: Assoc. Prof. Stefano Comai (University of Padua)

President-Elect: Prof. Sophie Erhardt (Karolinska Institute)

Past President: Prof. Florian Zepf (Jena University Hospital)

Vice-President: Assistant Professor Ana Pocivavsek (University of South Carolina)

Secretary & Treasurer: Prof. Edwin Lim (Jena University Hospital)

Member: Prof. Tsutomu Fukuwatari (University of Shiga Prefecture)

Member (Advisor): Prof. Emeritus Trevor Stone (University of Oxford)

ISTRY 2024 MUSAJO MEDAL WINNER: PROFESSOR DIETMAR FUCHS

We were grateful to have Dr Johanna Gostner (pictured right) to accept Prof. Fuch's medal on his behalf. Dr Goster provided a lovely presentation on his professional career dedicated to advancing tryptophan knowledge in the context of immunology and biomarker research, as well as sharing his well rounded personality being a photographer and mountaineer.



A message from Prof. Fuchs to our ISTRY community:

“During the last Tryptophan Conference in Jena my group and I was awarded with the Honorary Musajo Memorial Medal. Because of a medical issue i was unable to receive the medal in person, however, my collaborator Dr.Johanna M. Gostner could do this instead with great thanks, and meanwhile she forwarded the medal to me in Innsbruck. I'm enclosing a foto showing me with the medal to document this.” (left picture)



ISTRY 2024 AWARDEES

ISTRY TRAVEL AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to the following ECRs for being awarded an ISTRY Travel Grant for 2024:

Miss Daniëlle Holthuijsen (Maastricht University)
Dr Niklas Joisten (Technical University Dortmund)
Mrs Marie Kupjetz (Technical University Dortmund)
Miss Bavani Gunasegaran (Macquarie University)
Dr Samara Walpole (University of Wollongong)
Miss Charlise Basson (University of Pretoria)
Miss Lorraine Tan (Macquarie University)
Mrs Sandra Tatchum (University of Pretoria)
Miss Benedetta Barzon (University of Padua)
Mrs Alessa Henneberg (German Cancer Research Center, DKFZ)
Miss Ágnes Szabó (University of Szeged)

ISTRY is committed to supporting our ECRs by offering travel grants of up to €350.

ISTRY POSTER PRIZE WINNERS

Congratulations to our poster presentation winners:

1st Prize (300€): Miss Ivana Karabogdan (German Cancer Research Center, DKFZ)

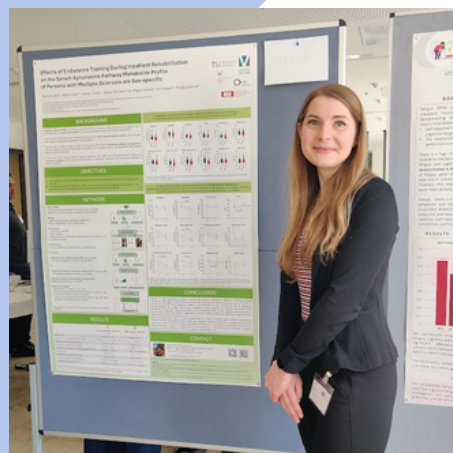
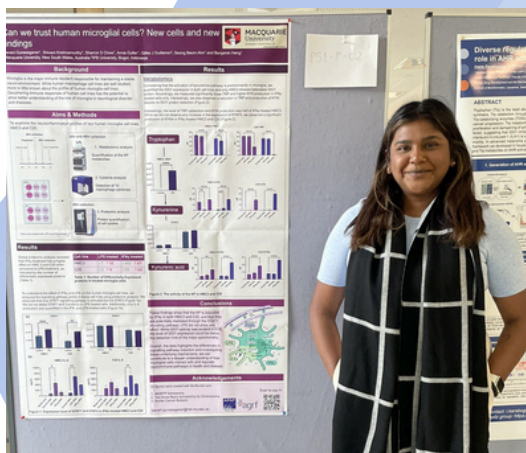
Poster title: *"Diverse regulation of tryptophan metabolism and its role in AHR activation in cancer"*

2nd Prize (250€): Miss Tiffany Wences-Chirino (Technical University Dortmund)

Poster title: *"A 12-week combined functional resistance and endurance training effect on kynurenines in persons with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis."*

3rd Prize (150€): Dr Sho Hatayama (University of Shiga Prefecture)

Poster title: *"Intermittent fasting affects brain kynurenic acid production in rats."*



THANK YOU TO THE ISTRY 2024 SPONSORS

A huge thank you to our sponsors and supporters for making this meeting possible, particularly, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Immusmol, MedChemExpress and lastly the hosting institute, Freidrich Schiller University and Jena University Hospital.

RESEARCHER HIGHLIGHT

EMERITUS PROFESSOR GRAZIELLA ALLEGRI



Career Highlights

Professor Allegri had a prolific career, with over 200 published papers primarily focused on tryptophan and its metabolites to advance our understanding of its role in various diseases. She highlights one of her early and notable discoveries was the accelerated metabolism of tryptophan during fever. This pivotal finding was later elucidated further by Japanese colleagues who isolated the enzyme IDO, clarifying the underlying mechanism. Throughout her career, Professor Allegri also synthesized numerous tryptophan derivatives in her lab, providing invaluable resources to the research community, including Professor Musajo, at a time when these compounds were not commercially available. A particularly fascinating highlight of her career was a collaborative project in the early 1960s with colleagues from Sardinia, where she investigated an invasion of *Schistocerca gregaria* Forsk. grasshoppers. Her discovery that these organisms also contain tryptophan and kynurenines was unexpected and underscored the widespread significance of tryptophan metabolism.

Career Advice

Prof. Allegri provided sage advice to early career researchers. Her main message was to pursue good ideas with determination, rather than hesitation, even if it requires sacrifice.

“Remember, the fruits of your labor may not be immediately visible. However, the effort you invest now can yield significant rewards in the future. Persevere, and your dedication may lead to remarkable achievements down the line.”

Life after Research

Now in her retirement, Prof. Allegri enjoys travelling and reflecting on her journeys through writing and making photobooks, creating vivid portrayals of her travels with both pictures and historic, narrative and observations.

Early Beginnings

In the early 1950s, Prof. Graziella was a student at the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Padova in Padova, Italy. She was mentored by our Musajo Memorial Medal namesake, Professor Luigi Musajo. She was deeply honoured when he asked her to continue researching with him, focusing on the metabolism of tryptophan, aiming to deepen our understanding of the roles of xanthurenic acid and other kynurenines in both physiology and pathology.

“Being invited to contribute to such groundbreaking work was incredibly significant for me, not only as a scientist but also as one of the first women in the field.”

CONTACT US

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