

TRAVEL GRANT REPORT

20th International Symposium on Microbial Ecology (ISME20)			
Auckland (New Zealand), Aug 16-21 2026			
Microbial Ecology section			
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Thanks to SSM's financial support, I was able to attend ISME20, where I presented my poster titled "Interactions between polyfluorinated (PFAS) chemicals and microbiota from the human gut and food systems."

During the poster sessions, I interacted with numerous researchers interested in host-microbe interactions, xenobiotic degradation, and microbial ecology across the food-gut continuum. Presenting this work led to several engaging discussions regarding both the methodological approaches used in my analyses and the broader implications of PFAS persistence in biological systems, yielding valuable suggestions for future directions in this research.



Beyond my own poster session, I had the pleasure of attending outstanding presentations by leaders in the field of microbial ecology. The conference covered a wide range of topics – spanning environmental fate of contaminants, gut microbiome resilience, and food system microbiology – which significantly broadened my perspective across these interconnected disciplines. I particularly appreciated the vibrant atmosphere, roundtable discussions, and thought-provoking questions raised throughout the scientific sessions.

The conference also provided a fantastic networking environment. I was able to catch up with colleagues while establishing new connections with researchers from around the world. Overall, ISME20 was an enriching experience, and I look forward to integrating the fresh concepts and ideas gathered at this event into my ongoing work.