

2019 6th SAPA-CT Annual Conference

Driving Success in Biotech/Pharma

Author: Sisi Yang, Xueyan Shao



SAPA-CT Annual Conference VIP Group Photo

On October 19th, 2019, 6th Annual Conference was successfully hosted by SAPA-CT in the beautiful autumn season of New Haven. The conference took place at Yale Medical School campus with about 180 attendees. Executive director of biotech company, professor of Yale University, president of biopharm company, global program lead gave speeches under the theme of “Driving Success in Biotech/pharma through Advanced Therapy, Big Data and Global Collaboration”.

At the beginning, Dr. Yan Yan, SAPA-CT Acting President welcomed all the attendees to the exciting 6th Annual Conference. She first introduced the theme

and mission of the event, and how it covers the wide scope of the association's member's efforts and impacts in the global life sciences. She appreciated the support and dedication from all SAPA-CT members, as well as the Executive Committee, Advisory Committee and Board of Directors. At the end of the opening speech, she looked forward to a successful year for the association.



Dr. Yan Yan Opening Speech

Session 1: Driving Success in Biotech/Pharma through Big Data and Global Collaboration

Dr. Ülo Palm, Senior Vice President of Digital Sciences in Allergan Pharmaceuticals, gave a speech titled "Pharmaceutical and Medical Sciences in the Age of AI and Global Collaboration". He critically pointed out the replication crisis in the current state of pharmacology and medical sciences. The reason behind may be that mono-causal explanation cannot represent the complex biological

system. To solve this problem, he suggested to improve global collaboration and used artificial intelligence to boost efficiency and accuracy of biomedical research.



Dr. Ülo Palm

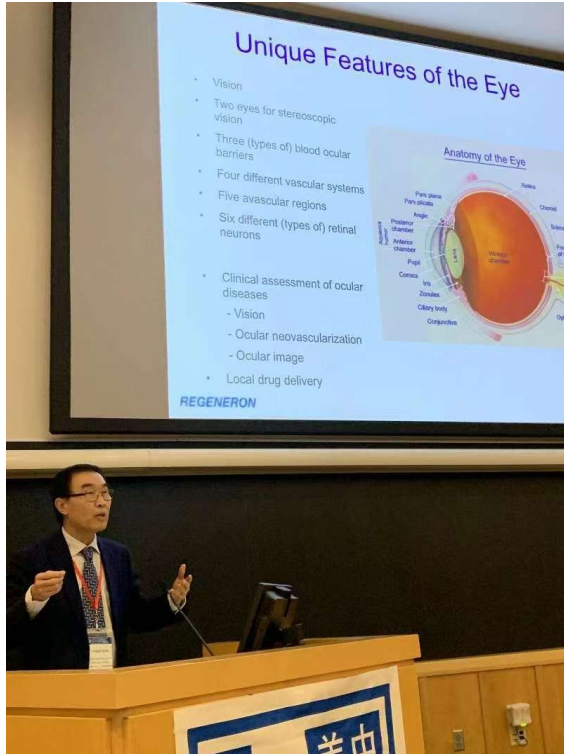
Dr. Haishan Xiong, Senior Vice President of business development foundation of Fountain Medical Development, Ltd, introduced “US-China Combined Drug Development Strategy in the Era of ICH”. He first pointed out that China right now is having a small clinical market with big potential. Then he explained three reasons: 1) Data acceptance between China and the US is a reality; 2) The number NDA approval of new drugs has a huge leap in 2017; 3) The speed of drug development has been increasing in China these years.



Dr. Haishan Xiong

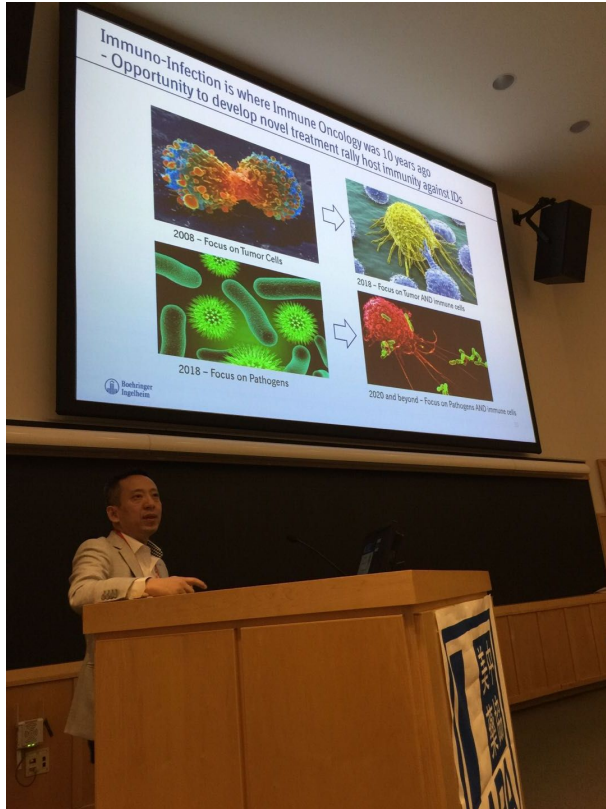
Session 2: Developing Advanced Therapeutics to Fulfill Unmet Medical Needs (I)

Dr. Jingtai Cao, the Director of Ophthalmology and Inflammatory Diseases in Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, gave a presentation, entitled “Preclinical Studies of Intravitreal Aflibercept Injection (VEGF Trap-Eye, EYLEA) for Treatment of Ocular Vascular Diseases”. First, he vividly described the structure and function of vision system. Next, he explained how VEGF Trap-Eye (EYLEA) can treat age-related macular degeneration (AMD), macular edema, and diabetic retinopathy. In the end, he emphasized the importance of dosage for its curative effect on inhibiting injury-induced corneal neovascularization.



Dr. Jingtai Cao

Dr. Timothy Zheng, the Executive Director of Immune Modulation in Boehringer Ingelheim, presented on the title of “Immunology Research at Boehringer Ingelheim”. He first emphasized the importance of autoimmunity on recovering from diseases. Next, he discussed the approaches of Boehringer Ingelheim using immunology research to treat infectious diseases and cancer. In terms of cancer, he illustrated an example of PD-1, which can turn “cold” tumors to “hot” tumors and makes them be recognized by immune cells. In terms of infectious diseases, he showed that the anti-PD-1 blockade has promising clinical experience against JC virus.



Dr. Timothy Zheng

Dr. Shawn Xu, the last speaker in the morning session, is the Co-founder and Executive Director of Sincere Innovation. He had a speech on the most popular topic in the cancer therapy - “Next Generation CAR Therapy”. To begin with, he revealed the limitation of CAR Therapy, such as, the physical barrier surrounding tumors that prevents immune cells from recognizing the tumors; exhaustion of T cells, etc. Then, he described in detail how to overcome the limitation and improve CAR Therapy.



Dr. Shawn (Xiangbin) Xu

Then, Ms. Sunny Jin shared recruitment plan and the future headquarters of Sincere Innovation. Sincere Innovation has advanced business models, diverse company culture and welfare and is looking for the top tier talents to join.



Ms. Sunny Jin

Dr. Jin Zhou, the former President of SAPA-CT, announced the SAPA-CT election results. Dr. Yan Yan, 6th SAPA-CT Annual Conference Chair and Dr. Xiaoyong

Yang, Associate Professor of Comparative Medicine and of Cellular & Molecular Physiology at Yale University School of Medicine, were elected to be the next SAPA-CT presidents (2019-2020).



Drs. Xiaoyong Yang, Yan Yan, Jin Zhou



On-site job fairs

Session 3: Developing Advanced Therapeutics to Fulfill Unmet Medical Needs (II)

Dr. Yong Zhu, Associate Professor of Epidemiology, Yale University, started the afternoon sessions by giving a presentation, “PiRNAgen: Develop a piRNA-based Therapeutics for Liver Cancer”. Dr. Zhu introduced piRNA-based therapeutics, which is a novel platform of drug development for multiple cancer types including liver cancer and glioma. The piRNA-based therapeutics covered more than 50 piRNA drug candidates for different types of cancer.



Dr. Yong Zhu

Dr. Mark Ma, Executive Director, Bioanalytical and Biomarker Development, Alexion Pharmaceuticals. In his presentation about biomarker in drug development, he firstly explained the reasons why current biomarker development is prone to failure. Then Dr. Ma introduced approaches to improve reliability and efficiency of biomarker by using method validation, clinical translation, and evaluation. At the end of his presentation, Dr. Ma shared his view on future perspectives on biomarker usage in drug development and emphasized the importance of using a strategic approach in this area.



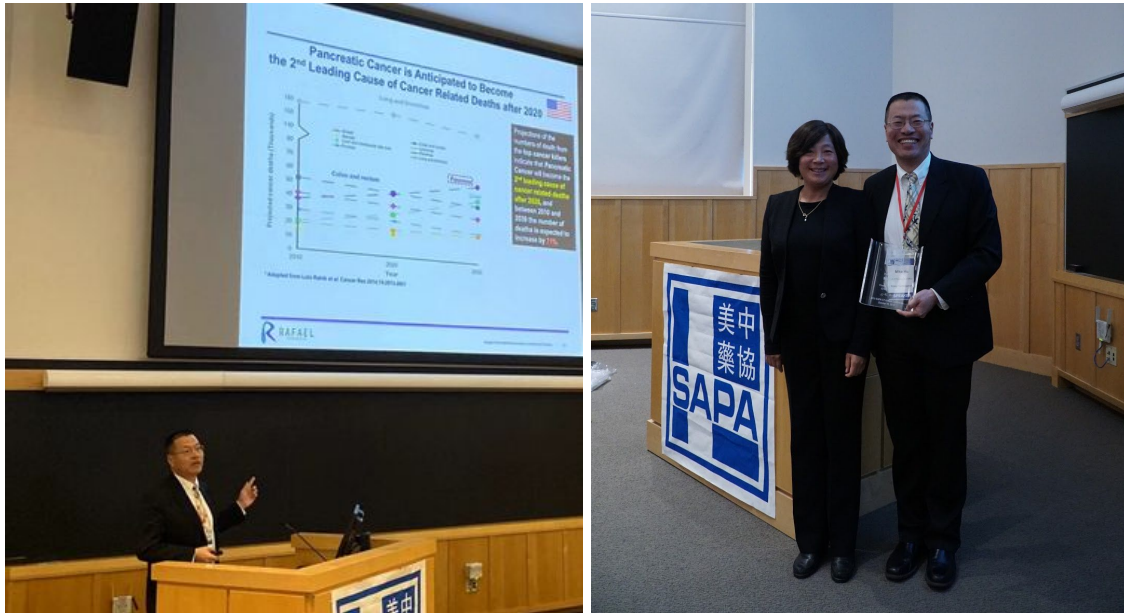
Dr. Mark Ma

Dr. Frank Wang, Vice President, Business Development, Pharmacology & Toxicology, Medicilon. The title of his presentation was “Preclinical Models for Evaluating Immuno-oncology Agents”. Dr. Wang briefly overviewed immuno-oncology therapy at the beginning of his presentation, listing several immune-oncology therapy targets including PD-1, PD-L1, CTLA-4, and CD47. Dr. Wang also introduced preclinical mouse models and nonhuman primate models in immune-oncology therapy. Lastly, he introduced the history of Medicilon that locates at Boston.



Dr. Frank Wang

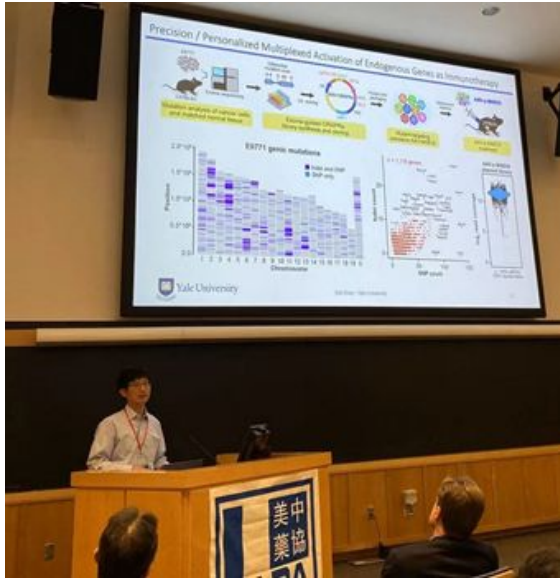
Dr. Mike Hu, Chief Development Officer, Rafael Pharmaceuticals, introduced the development of innovative therapies to target cancer metabolism. Dr. Hu started the presentation by raising the issue with low survival rate in pancreatic cancer and the limitations of targeted and cancer immunotherapy. He pointed out the fact that cancer cells may experience metabolic alterations, which could be a target for cancer therapy.



Dr. Mike Hu

Session 4: Filling the Gap between Academia and Commercialization

Dr. Sidi Chen, Assistant Professor, Department of Genetics & Systems Biology Institute, Yale University, School of Medicine, gave a presentation with the title of “CRISPRing Immunotherapy Target Discovery and Direct Immune-gene Therapy”. Dr. Chen overviewed immunotherapy revolution in medicine, major challenge in immunotherapy, and genome engineering for immunotherapy. After that, he introduced the approach his research team used, in vivo genetic screen in primary T cells for immunotherapy target discovery.



Dr. Sidi Chen

Dr. Yu-Hui Rogers, Senior Director, Research Strategy, Asia, The Jackson Laboratory, was responsible for research strategy development in Asia. She firstly overviewed human microbiome project briefly, and then talked about the history, the mission, and the world-class infrastructures, facility, and research results of the Jackson Laboratory.



Dr. Yu-Hui Rogers

Dr. Yanfeng (Alex) Wang, Director, Maryland International Incubator, University of Maryland, gave a presentation “From Human to Technology Commercialization: What We Need to Know during International Collaboration”. At the beginning of his presentation, Dr. Wang made a general introduction of the Maryland International Incubator. Later, Dr. Wang inspired everybody to behave professionally in dealing with human affairs and then emphasized on the importance of international collaboration.



Dr. Yanfeng (Alex) Wang

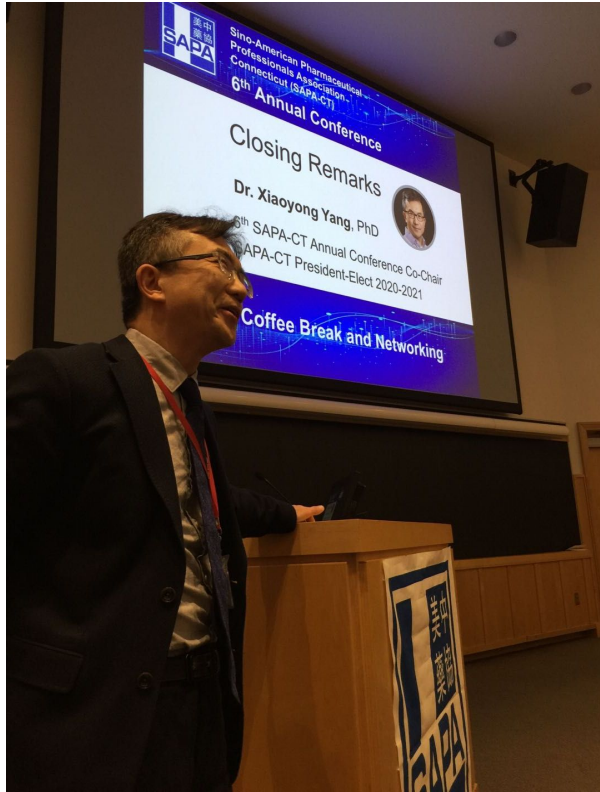
The presentation “Inventing Yourself and Investing Yourself” was given by Dr. John Sun, Global Program Lead, Novartis. Dr. Sun shared his view on the difference between inventing yourself and investing yourself. By rethinking the ever-changing ecosystem, he encouraged everybody to re-invent ourselves and re-invest ourselves.



Dr. John Sun interviewed Miss Qing Chang

Dr. John Sun

Dr. Xiaoyong Yang, 6th SAPA-CT Annual Conference Co-chair, SAPA-CT President-Elect 2020-2021, gave closing remarks by expressing gratitude to all the speakers, SAPA leadership team (Including SAPA-CT and SAPA headquarter), volunteers, sponsors, and the attendees. Specifically, Dr. Yang mentioned he did learn a lot from the presentations made by different speakers.



Dr. Xiaoyong Yang

SAPA-CT would like to thank the organizing committee, volunteers, sponsors, speakers, and all the conference attendees.

2019 SAPA-CT Annual Conference Sponsors:

Boehringer Ingelheim, Regeneron, Simcere, MCE, Kelun Pharmaceutical, Medicilon, Association of Chinese Students and Scholars at Yale

2019 SAPA-CT Annual Conference Organizing committee:

Chair: Yan Yan, MD, PhD; Co-Chair: Xiaoyong Yang, PhD

Liming Chen; Xiaobin Xu, PhD; Yongmei Li, PhD; Susan Liu-Chen, MD; Bo Qu, PhD; Kai Ying, PhD; Xueyan Shao, Mary Zhao, PhD

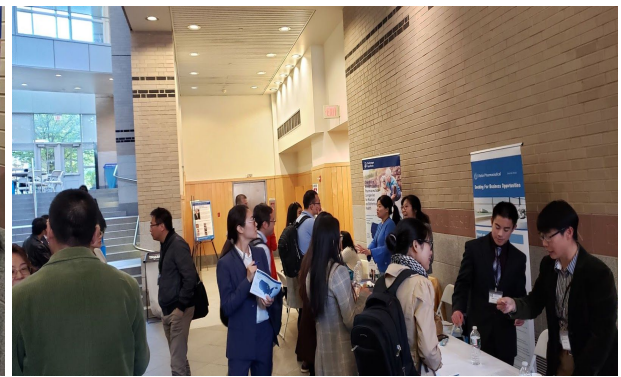
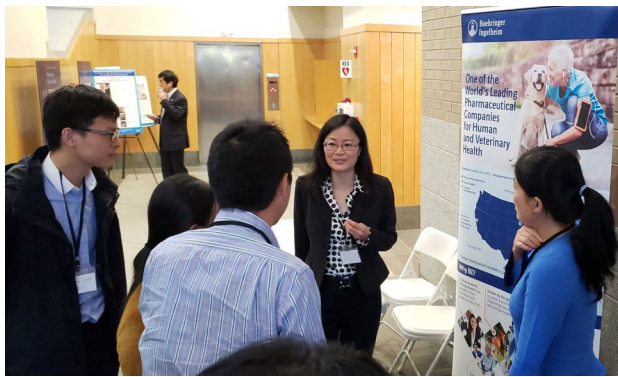
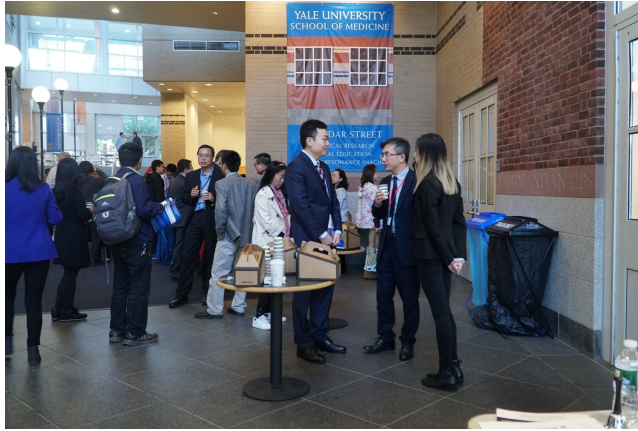
Volunteers:

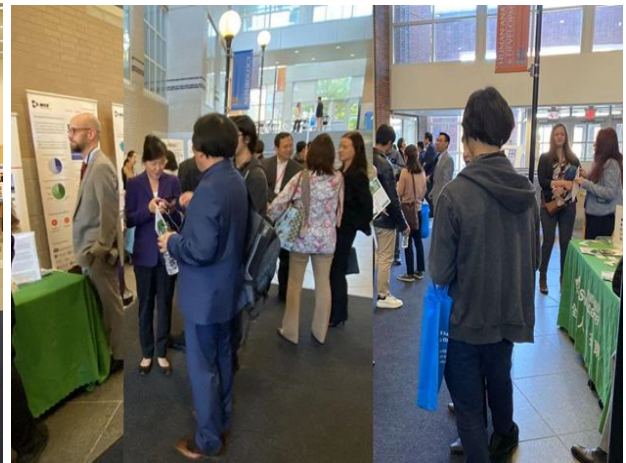
Qingqing Zhou, Fancheng Chen, Jenny Wei, Abulizi, Wanqing Lyu, Yalai Bai, Jinyu, Sisi Yang, Geng, Meiling, Ellen Yuan, Chao Zheng, Linyan Wei, Tiffany



Networking during coffee break and Gala party:









2019 SAPA-CT Corporate Sponsor Awards:
Boehringer Ingelheim and Kelun Pharmaceutical



Boehringer Ingelheim



Kelun Pharmaceutical

2019 SAPA-CT Volunteer Service Awards:



Dr. Xiaoyong Yang



Xueyan Shao



Dr. Susan Liu-Chen

2019 6th SAPA-CT Annual Conference Sponsorship



REGENERON



MEDICILON
美迪西生物医药



耶魯大學中國學生學者聯合會
Association of Chinese Students and Scholars at Yale