

My name is Dr. Ian Williams, and I'm a National Niemann-Pick Disease Foundation-Fellowship funded researcher working on the neurobiology of NPC1 at the University of Oxford. I was able to attend the inaugural Gordon Conference on Lysosomal Diseases, held in January in Galveston, Texas, because of the funding provided the Niemann-Pick Disease Group (UK).

The Gordon Research Conferences are international meetings where leading scientists in the field get together to present and discuss the very latest research. They happen every two years, and are an excellent opportunity to meet the other people who work on these rare diseases. The meeting is designed in such a way that there is plenty of time to interact with the other attendees, which is a great way to meet fellow scientists one-to-one and helps foster collaborations. The "confidential" nature of the meeting strongly encourages the attendees to present unpublished data, so you get to hear about the most cutting edge work being done, which can only help to improve the work of everyone involved. There is also a strong emphasis on giving a forum for young scientists to present their work, which is invaluable for their career development. I gave a poster at the meeting and was very pleased with the level of interest and input it received.

I found the meeting incredibly useful; I met with some of the most eminent scientists and clinicians working on NPC1 whose insight and experience of this disease has been most helpful to me in planning my future research direction. It also gave me the chance to organize a collaboration, which will allow investigation into novel aspects of this disease. Without the funding of the NPDG(UK), my participation would not have been possible, so thank you so much for your generous support. I am already looking forward to the next meeting in 2013!