

The background is a dark grey chalkboard with various white chalk sketches. On the left, there's a large drawing of a microscope. Above it, a globe of the Earth is sketched. In the bottom left, there's a drawing of a stack of books. In the bottom right, there are sketches of a percentage sign, an exclamation mark, and a right-angle symbol. The overall theme is academic and scientific.

Leire Casas Fraile

2016 Collaborative Scholarship Summary

I was granted the OARSI scholarship in 2016; accordingly I had the opportunity to spend six months (October 2016 to March 2017) in Tissue Homeostasis and Disease group within Skeletal Biology and Engineering Research Center at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Rik Lories.

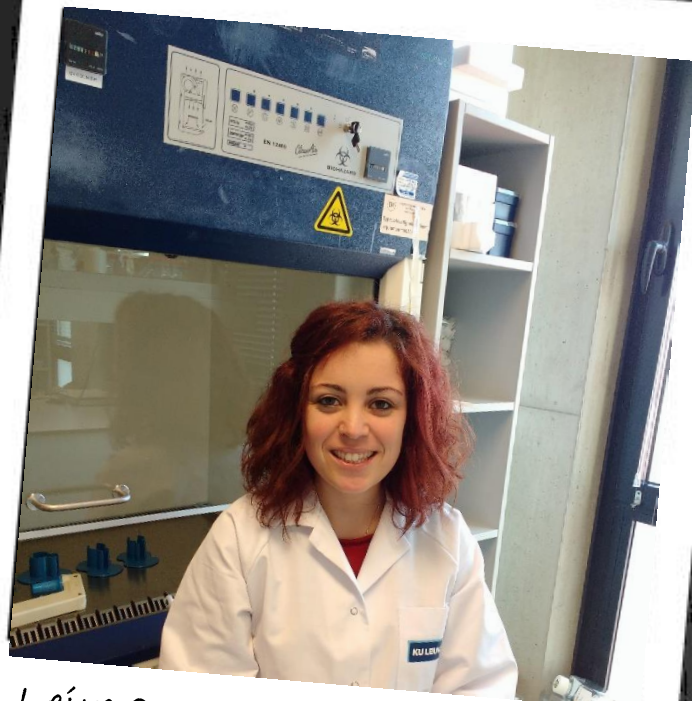
The main objective of the internship was to study muscle function and control, and its relation with joint (in)stability by using *Frzb*^{-/-} mice model (a well-known osteoarthritis model), produced by tissue homeostasis and disease group. Based on the finding that a specific type of limb girdle muscular dystrophy is associated with upregulation of FRZB levels we wanted to analyse muscle as an adding factor in the onset and progression of osteoarthritis.

Although the stay was designed for three months at first, the opportunity of conducting more interesting experiments made us to decide to prolong the stay three months more. During these months I gained very useful diverse skills as a PhD student. For instance, I acquired the knowledge of experimentation with animal models. In addition, I had the opportunity to work in a different team with people from all around the world. All the lab members were fantastic and I want to highlight that they helped me a lot.

The new collaboration established between the neuromuscular diseases group in Biodonostia and the Tissue Homeostasis and Disease group is being successful. In fact, we continue in touch and I am currently working on this project in Spain due to the amount of data I obtained during the stay.

Summarizing, I would like to point out that I am glad that OARSI gave me this opportunity that it has been better than expected, I am very grateful.





Leire Casas at the Katholieke
Universiteit Leuven

