WNT and β-catenin signalling in airway smooth muscle: emerging concepts for asthma

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Acknowledgements
“The scientific man does not aim at an immediate result. He does not expect that his ideas will be readily taken up. His work is like that of the planter - for the future. His duty is to lay the foundation for those who are to come, and point the way.”

True words from Nikolas Tesla. Although he was referring to the wireless transmission of energy, it applies to the whole of science. I certainly hope that this bundle of work has contributed, if only a tiny bit, to the foundation on which others can build. Naturally, I couldn’t have done this without the help of others. Individual prowess might win you games, but team work will win you the tournament.

PI’s

First I would like to thank my direct supervisor and promoter Reinoud. You have been of incredible value to me. You were the one that hired me to do this PhD. I had virtually no real experience in molecular biology, but yet you gave me a chance. You helped me through the initial phase of my PhD, when I had no real idea what I was doing. As I developed my skills and expertise and became a more capable scientist, you trusted my instincts and allowed me to work on a more independent level. I am very thankful that you allowed me to work in this way. In addition, I want to express my appreciation of your sharp mind. You were always able (and willing) to provide constructive criticism where necessary, which has contributed greatly to the overall quality of this work. Your positive mind-set was an excellent counter to balance my sometimes pessimistic (although I would argue realistic) point of view. Your perseverance has amazed me at times, working extremely hard, while keeping your family happy at the same time. A truly impressive feat, although you may want to relax a bit more! Finally, I want to thank you for giving me the chance to present my work at numerous (international) conferences. These were truly joyful events, and is not something every PhD-student gets to experience. I feel that your way of training, which extends beyond the sciences, has prepared me to be a successful independent scientist on multiple levels.

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**Office colleagues**

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**Pablo**, you were there from the beginning together with Tjitske. It didn’t take long for me to appreciate that your way of thinking came very close to mine. From the very start we frequently talked about what a scientific mind-set entails. As we liked to say, the most dangerous phrase in the language is, “we’ve always done it this way”. I have stuck by that rule ever since. You are truly a character, at times even a caricature, and some of the trips that we’ve made, often together with David, are forever engraved in my mind. Without a doubt you have become one of my best friends throughout the years, and I am positive that we will remain in touch for the rest of our lives. My brother, only to make damage!
Vessa, your especially loud laugh was something I could never ignore, and you are perhaps the only person on this planet that could legitimately call me “Timmy”. Sure, we had our arguments, some worse than others, but we always managed to talk about it and usually resolved our issues as swiftly as they started. I think we have shared an office for the longest time, and as a result, most of the time you were the first to hear about my occasional frustrations, and vice versa. We were always willing to help each other out and I am sure that our paths will cross again at some point.

Hao Xiao, although you never stayed in our office for a very long time, I really enjoyed the time that you were there. Your personality is like an anime character at times. When you are happy, you cheer. When you laugh, you laugh frantically. This often helped raise my mood instantly. I also enjoyed our occasional Chinese language lessons and general talk about Chinese culture. Together with Bing you have taught me a great deal about your country, including the food. Your cooking was amazing!

John-Poul, you were the most recent addition to our office, and I have come to know you for only a short while. Your intense devotion to the things you like together with your posh accent makes for an interesting character. I really enjoyed your enthusiasm when it comes to (interesting) science. From all the people on this department I’ve probably had the most intense scientific discussions with you. I am glad we shared an office and we will definitely keep in touch.

Other colleagues

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strongly to the scientific method, and it was always a pleasure to discuss its numerous pitfalls. Your constant willingness to collaborate was refreshing, even though we never did anything with our thoughts on AKAP-WNT. I hope you will achieve your dreams and start your own AKAP lab someday.

David, even though I fully supported your career switch, doing real science (yeah right), it was definitely a tough pill to swallow when you left our department. The occasional trips that we made together with Pablo are definitely one of the highlights of my life. Also on the work floor you were always willing to brainstorm about certain topics. You are a nice guy in the truest sense of the word, enforced by your British genes for politeness. This made for some interesting conversation at times, as I could always provoke you by saying something bluntly honest, or needlessly black and white. Like Pablo I consider you a friend for life. I wish you all the best in your future career, even though you can be pretty damn indecisive at times.

Bing, what happened to your Nobel price? Although I had to laugh for a moment, I admired it. If everyone could think big like you did, the world would be a different place. I admire you for your continuous struggle to unchain yourself from the shackles of Chinese oppression. You have worked tirelessly the past couple of months to obtain a permanent residence permit. I have complete faith that you will become a Dutch, with two children and a dog, while living in a terraced house in a middle-class neighbourhood. I consider you a good friend. You are always smiling, even when feeling down, and I love your honesty and down to earth personality.

Pavan, I still remember the first day you arrived here in The Netherlands. It was cold, wet and windy, and we were going ice skating. It took you like an hour to go from Lewenborg to the city centre. You must have instantly regretted coming here. You are a great guy with an infectious laugh and I have always loved our lengthy and often in-depth discussions about completely random stuff. I’m glad I can finally have an hour long talk about teleportation. Although your humour sometimes borders on the childish, we have a lot of things in common and I am certain we will remain in touch for years to come. I hope you can find a career path in the future that you are passionate about, and are able to push through to make it a success. With the right mind-set and discipline I am sure you will succeed.
Chapter eleven

Others

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