"Choices, chances, and changes"

An interview with an inspiring toxicologist

HOT New Board
HOT Webinars
HOT Trainee Wall

www.toxicology.org/groups/sig/hot/newsLetter.asp
Dear HOT members,

As this is my last message as a president, I would like to propose a reflection on how we can make our organization stronger. Some things to consider: 1- We share the same interests. We are an international group of toxicologists with Spanish/Portuguese background. This makes us unique, in terms of scientific perspective as it relates to our community. 2- We are interdisciplinary and from all sectors of professional activities. Our combined expertise and professional experience can be used to address scientific questions; and 3- We are a common place for network. Interactions within the scientific community are essential components of the process of science.

Let’s use these features to bring forward our voices, share our research and science, increase our participation in the SOT, and enhance and advance the professional development of our members. If you have any ideas that you would like to develop or disseminate, please get in contact with us! Together we are moving forward.

I want to congratulate the 2021-2022 HOT officers for all the great work and fantastic support to the organization. I express my big gratitude to: Teresa Palacios, Veronica Ramirez Alcantara, Julieta Martino, Kelly Salinas, Enrique Fuentes-Mattei, Alexandra Maria Moita Antunes, Patricia Ruiz, Mercedes Salvador-Silva, Federico Sinche Chele, Isabel Alvarado-Cruz, Jose Delgado, Julia Rezende da Silva and Rodrigo Gonçalves Queijo.

I am certain the leadership of this organization is looking forward to a great year. Please, join me in welcoming the new Executive Board, see page 4. As you know this year, Teresa Palacios is the president, a person who brings joy to HOT in her and really cares about every detail that could help our members. You couldn’t be in better hands.

As I always want to remind you! Keep connecting and collaborating. Together we go further.

Aline de Conti
2021-2022 HOT President
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HISPANIC ORGANIZATION OF TOXICOLOGISTS

SOT Special Interest Group “Building Bridges Through Toxicology”

HOT and our mission

HOT is one of the Special Interest Group of the Society of Toxicology (SOT). The main purpose of HOT is to improve the professional development of Hispanic and Portuguese-speaking toxicologists worldwide.

Advantages to be a HOT member:
- Be part of an international network of students and professionals
- Participate in scientific and educational activities
- Improve diversity of scientists in the toxicology field
- Increase global awareness of toxicology

HOT Endowment Fund

You can contribute to the training and career development of Ibero-American students and postdocs by donating to our HOT Award Fund:

2022 -2023 HOT Executive Committee

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Website
http://www.toxicology.org/groups/sig/hot

Facebook
@hispanicorganizationoftoxicologists
Promote contact between junior and senior researchers, students and toxicologists from European companies, governments and universities involved in the development and use of in vitro and in silico approaches.

21–25 November, 2022 Barcelona–Sitges, Spain

TOPIC OF INTEREST

- Organ-on-chip models
- Computational toxicology
- Local toxicity testing
- Animal product free NAMs
- Models, biomarkers and assays
- Bio-engineering
- GIVIMP, GCMP and GLP
- Other

IMPORTANT DATE

- Abstract submission
  1 December, 2021 - 22 May 2022
- Early-bird registration
  1 December, 2022 - 22 July 2022
- Notification day
  22 June, 2022
- Final programme online
  22 July, 2022
- End date online registration
  19 November, 2022

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FOR SUBMISSION

Abstract Submission | European Society of Toxicology In Vitro (estiv.org)
In the following pages, you will enjoy a special interview conducted by our 2022-2023 HOT Vice President-Elect, Carmen Rubio Armendariz, with this great Toxicologist Betina Lew, who contribute a lot in our HOT community. Please enjoy!
Carmen (C): Before discussing professional aspects tell us a little bit about you, Betina Lew, a successful Brazilian Toxicologist.

Betina (B): I was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, grew up in a family of 4 kids and many pets, in an apartment building. Since a very young age, I knew that I wanted to work with biological sciences, because I wanted to learn about animals. I was always interested in animal science, biology, and more specifically “how things work” which brought me to the research in my advanced degrees in endocrinology and physiology.

C: I imagine you were doing your undergrad at an university in Brazil when you decided to follow a master/PhD in Toxicology. Tell us what made you choose this scientific field.

B: My bachelor’s degree was in animal science, later, in my masters (in Israel), I worked in environment factors of female reproduction and my PhD degree (Michigan State/Sao Paulo State), focused on effects of high fat diet in mammary development. My research was always aimed at studying environmental factors that “de-regulate” the normal functioning of the reproductive machinery. After my PhD, I worked as a postdoctoral fellow/research assistant, at the Environmental Medicine Department in the University of Rochester for almost 5 years. At that role, I studied the effect of dioxins in the normal development of mammary tissue and potential for breast cancer. The development from research focused in animals to human health was almost natural. At this time in my career my main passions are improving health equity in medical devices and reducing the use of animal in research as much as possible. I do believe that the balanced knowledge of physiology and toxicology gives me the perfect opportunity to do so, fulfilling my childhood dreams of understanding physiology and my passion for advancing human health.

C: What was the status of Toxicology in your home country at the time you were at the university and how has Toxicology developed in Brazilian Higher Education?

B: I can only say that now a days we have strong supporters for the career development of more junior toxicologists, leading to the training of many brilliant young toxicologists. But Toxicology as a major is somehow new in Brazil.

C: Your international career is outstanding. What would you say is the main step you took that contributed to your success?

B: Thank you for that! Very kind! I don’t think there is a “formula for success”. I think the career of each person is very different! In my case, it was a lot of learning, hard work, never losing the curiosity for science, understanding my own limitations, being a little fearless and taking risks. Also, having colleagues that became friends (and mentors) is always great when I need a piece of advice. I truly think that a good balance of science, networking, and volunteering to great causes (for example, giving back to the Toxicology community by mentoring more junior scientists or volunteering my time to the Society of Toxicology) were (and still are, because I am a work in progress!) very important factors in my career development.

C: Along your career development you have always been committed to continuous education. Do you have any tips for our young Hispanic toxicologists?

B: That’s very true! I think that working in a broad array of different sectors and moving on at a later time in my life from academia to private industry, almost forced me to constantly study. I read a lot of scientific papers, regulatory guidelines and trade association articles. I also take formal courses/trainings/webinars when possible. My tip is: be humble, know what you don’t know and seek advice from experts in other fields. Don’t be shy, ask questions! Most importantly, believe in yourself. Get over the “impostor syndrome” (we all have those moments, especially the female colleagues). In my opinion, even if you are very early in your career, graduating from your PhD, you are already amongst the top of the population (only about 1.2% of the US population has a doctorate degree)!
C: We know that you are an amazing mentor, tell us about the skills you try to promote among young toxicologists and how you make your mentoring so successful.

B: Thank you again for that! There are some skills beyond the technical ones, that in my opinion are crucial now a days: communication, time management, organization, and teamwork. For the communication part: pay attention to the “passive communication” (this is definitely one of my weaknesses). Listen to understand (listen more than you speak), read what you’ve written and QC your work to make sure the quality is great! Check for misspellings, grammar, and unfinished sentences.

C: SOT and HOT have been relevant platforms for networking and career development. How has SOT impacted your career as a toxicologist? How important is HOT for you and for any Hispanic toxicologists?

B: Extremely important. As I mentioned in the previous questions, my career development was a balance of a lot of dedication to studies, hard work and a strong network. SOT gave me the opportunity to not only take on several CE courses, symposium, webinars, and other technical education, but I also had a chance of developing my communication skills by presenting posters and oral presentations, discussing research with colleagues and being involved in the community. I do believe that HOT and SOT were instrumental in my career as a Toxicologist.

C: Your professional experience is huge/wide and diverse. You could have chosen between academia, government and industry. Tell us about your view about the profile of toxicologists in industry. What challenges and opportunities are there in the USA and Latin America for toxicologists?

B: This is an extensive question. I think the desired skills in industry also varies immensely with the type of industry that one is focusing. For example, if a Toxicologist works on a CRO as a study director or bench scientist, the desired skills may be more focused on attention to details and the ability of working independently. For the type of work I do, collaboration is key! We work closely with several cross functional teams that often have different goals in mind. It is extremely important to communicate clearly with the teams, manage expectations and highlight the importance of Toxicology in product development and throughout the lifecycle of the product. Regarding challenges, I think that for us (Scientists of Latin American origin), there are many challenges to overcome. We come from different countries, we need to learn a different language and communicate clearly in that language. The competition is very stiff, and we have to refine our skills constantly. The same is true for opportunities! In a global world, is highly desirable to have scientists in the team that are able to communicate to different cultures. In global launches it is an advantage to have a diverse personal background.

C: Finally, as everyone, along your career you might have faced several obstacles or difficulties. Tell us about them. Learning from your experience could be helpful for our HOT members. Is there anything you would recommend not to do?

B: Yes of course there were obstacles! Many! I can’t think of anything that really held me back though. I take obstacles and difficulties as lessons and if I learned something from them, then it was worthy. That is my philosophy in life. All mistakes and errors can become lessons. There are no certainties in life. There is no “permanent” job, nothing is permanent. My mantra is and always was: Take a chance! In fact, I will finish this with one of my favorite quotes: Never forget the three “C’s of Life: Choices, chances, and changes – “you must make a choice to take a chance, or your life will never change.”

Carmen Rubio Armendariz, Ph.D.
2022-2023 HOT Vice President Elect

Betina J. Lew, Ph.D., DABT, ERT
Associate Director, Toxicology & Biocompatibility
Johnson & Johnson MedTech
The Webinar on “Conflict Resolution Strategies in Academia, Government and Industry” organized by the HOT Education Committee was held virtually on May 4th. The topic was chosen because conflict is a part of our everyday personal lives, as well as our professional lives. It has been estimated that managers and HR spend at least 25 percent of their time resolving workplace conflicts. Major impacts of unresolved conflicts may include lower performance and emotional stress of the parties involved. Thus, the goal of the webinar was to provide insights and simple strategies that can be implemented as part of the conflict resolution process by the parties involved across different workforce sectors. The organizers and moderators for this event were Dr. Federico Sinche-Councilor and Education Committee Chair, and Dr.(c) José Delgado-Graduate Student Representative and Education Committee Volunteer. Our speakers included Drs. Teresa Palacios-Hernández from the US FDA and current HOT President, Peter L. Goering from the US FDA and past president of SOT (2015-2016), Sasha Adkins from Loyola University Chicago, and Robert P. Casillas from Biopharma Group Latham and HOT past president (2017-2018). Dr. Palacios-Hernández provided an overview of the organization’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, mentoring and professional development of its members and the public at large. Dr. Palacios-Hernández’s intervention highlighted the need for keeping open communication between the parties involved as a means to solve conflicts at the workplace. Dr. Goering’s intervention focused on the common types of conflicts in the workplace. He mentioned the importance of an “Open Door Policy” as a means to reduce or avoid any perception of unfair resources allocation among the members of the organization. Dr. Adkins’s intervention highlighted the importance of the interpersonal perspective as a strategy to address conflicts at the workplace. They pointed out that conflicts can become opportunities to improve relationships and that any conflict can be eventually solved. Finally, Dr. Casillas provided a perspective on conflict resolution from the private industry. He pointed out that conflicts could result into a monetary cost because excellent employees might eventually resign from workplaces where conflicts are not addressed properly. The discussion panel at the end of all speaker’s interventions provided the space and time for the audience to interact and ask questions to all our panelists. This event was possible thanks to the support and assistance from the HOT Executive Committee, SOT, and the HOT Social Media Team.
Webinar: Immigration journey of international students and early career post-doctorates in the United States

Date
April 28th, 2022

Last April 28th, HOT, in collaboration with the Women in Toxicology special interest group, hosted the webinar “Immigration journey of international students and early career post-doctorates in the United States” which was focused on providing information about relevant immigration questions that arise for international toxicologists in the US while transitioning to the job market. Maurice Goldman from Goldman&Goldman Law firm introduced attendees to the different type of visas, and green card specific details, covering student visas and when and how to transition from this type of visa when trying to obtain a postdoctoral position or a job. Details and time frames for work visas as well as the different options for green card applications were included in the webinar. Maurice’s intervention provided a clear general overview about the different visa options for students and postdocs.

Dr. Ashwini Phadnis-Moghe, (Associate Director, Preclinical and Translational Development at Bluebird Bio) and Dr. Agnes Karmas (Senior Toxicologist, ILS an Inotiv Company) (from India and Canada, respectively) shared their personal experiences as non-US citizen toxicologists working for industry. Their experiences were enlightening because immigration requirements for visas are very particular depending on the nationality of origin. Some of the main recommendations for transitioning smoothly along your immigration journey were:

- Choose your next step in your career wisely and be aware of the immigration requirements and plan ahead of time
- Keep focus on building your academic profile; publication record, citations, paper reviews, awards and achievements, and service in societies to prove how recognized you are in your field
- Look for support from your PhD advisor, thesis committee, collaborators, and extended network
- Consult immigration lawyer or mentors who are also immigrants
- Stay focused on your goal and be patient!

Our last panelist, Dr. Carmen Rubio-Armendariz (Professor of Toxicology, Universidad de La Laguna, Spain. WIT-SIG junior Councilor & HOT Vice President elect) shared a remarkably interesting topic, internationalization, which pretends to form global PhDs, by encouraging PhD students to attend international meetings, collaborate with toxicologists around the world and perform international exchanges to expand their experiences abroad. Internationalization of PhD student represents an early step to pursue a career abroad.

Lastly, attendees asked the panelists questions related to green card and student visas depending on specific nationalities and situations, which can be consulted in our website. HOT thanks the speakers, WIT and SOT for their support during this webinar.
Phenolic compounds in water systems
how yeasts combination can reduce their toxicity

BY VALÉRIE PIHEN

My name is Valérie Pihen and I am currently a Ph.D. student in Water Sciences at Universidad de las Americas Puebla in Mexico. My research focuses on degrading persistent organic pollutants, mainly mixtures of phenols, from industrial wastewater using combinations of yeasts with ligninolytic capacity.
What is going on?

Phenols are used in many industrial processes such as oil refineries, ceramics, resins, paints, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, textiles, paper, and plastic. In some countries, water containing these pollutants is sent to wastewater treatment plants, while in others these contaminants are discharged directly into river water, endangering the environment and human health [1,2]. Phenols can pass through biological membranes and accumulate in fatty tissue deposits due to their hydrophobic nature; they can cause acute and chronic toxicity, histopathological changes, as well as carcinogenicity [2]. Similarly, these compounds affect fish and marine mammals, due to their bioaccumulative properties, even at low concentrations [1,2].

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), phenol is listed as one of the priority pollutants, while some of its derivatives, such as bisphenol A, are on the list of endocrine disrupting compounds (EDCs) [1,3]. In addition, some phenols, such as pentachlorophenol and nonylphenol, are part of the list of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) of the Stockholm Convention [4]. Therefore, the efficient removal of phenolic compounds from wastewater is of great concern worldwide to prevent their entry into the environment. For this, it is important to have effective, clean, sustainable, and low-cost wastewater treatment technologies, such as biological processes. The proposal is to use yeasts with ligninolytic capacity since they produce enzymes, such as laccases and peroxidases, involved in the oxidation of phenolic compounds [5].

To this end, I am currently investigating whether different yeasts strains are capable of degrading and reducing the toxicity of phenol, pentachlorophenol, nonylphenol, p-nitrophenol and bisphenol A individually and their mixtures. To demonstrate this, synthetic water containing phenols is used with the idea of scaling up to industrial wastewater. So far, according to the results obtained based on yeast growth on the phenols studied, this new technology has the potential to reduce the toxicity of phenolic compounds in water treatment.

For more information about the project, you can consult the YouTube video “Toxicity reduction of phenolic compounds in water systems by yeasts”: https://youtu.be/kRxTn4R3Xxw.

Valérie Pihen, M.Sc.
Ph.D. Candidate at Universidad de las Americas Puebla, Mexico
valerie.pihenmz@udlap.mx

References
12th Congress of Toxicology in Developing Countries

April 15–18, 2024

On behalf of the Sociedad de Toxicología de Chile and the International Union of Toxicology (IUTOX), with great pleasure we invite you to the 12th Congress of Toxicology in Developing Countries (CTDCXII) in Santiago, Chile.

SAVE THE DATE

More information to come.  https://www.iutox.org/ctdc.asp
**Important Dates**

- **Deadline early registration**
  May 15, 2022

- **Deadline late breaking abstracts**
  July 13, 2022  publication in the abstract book

- **Deadline late breaking abstracts**
  August 31, 2022  publication on the congress website

- **ICT 2022**
  September 18-21, 2022

- **SOT 62 Annual Meeting**
  March 19-23, 2023

**Information - COVID-19**

- ICT 2022 is planned as a full on-site congress. However, we are closely monitoring pandemic developments and will respond accordingly.
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#### Sister Organizations

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If your Hispanic Organization is planning a Toxicology meeting or if you are organizing a Toxicology event intended for a primarily Hispanic audience and want to promote in the upcoming Toxenlaces issues, send an email to Alexandra Maria Moita Antunes (Councilor for Sister Organizations) at alexandra.antunes@tecnico.ulisboa.pt.
ANNOUNCEMENT

HOT wants you to be part of the organization! To make it available to everyone, HOT accepts applications from non-SOT members to become HOT members. Yes, that is right! You only have to have the desire to collaborate with and be part of our great organization.

Your HOT membership provides you with valuable resources throughout your scientific career as for networking through the largest Hispanic toxicologist community, giving you opportunity for Travel Awards or serving as a mentor to the young Hispanic toxicologists; besides you receive the Toxenlaces newsletter!

Download the application by clicking on the following link: Non-SOT Member Application. So, what are you waiting for? We are looking forward to receiving your application today!

Follow us on Facebook at: http://www.facebook.com/hispanicorganizationoftoxicologists

Don’t forget to visit also the SOT Facebook page:

Toxenlaces is the newsletter that informs Hispanic toxicologists in the United States and the international Spanish and Portuguese-speaking scientific communities about important toxicological events and issues occurring in our countries. It is electronically published and distributed to our membership and Sister Organizations in Ibero-America. Toxenlaces disseminates critical dates for events, health perspectives and funding and training opportunities. It serves as a toxicology forum for our members and other partner organizations, engages in educational outreach to the Hispanic communities and provides the essential elements to support networking among Hispanic toxicologists. Toxenlaces is open to receive collaborations from HOT and SOT members and Sister Organizations. You can collaborate with short scientific articles, news or notes related with toxicology. Other ways to collaborate is by nominating your peers or yourself for the HOT Trainee Wall. For more information about collaborating with Toxenlaces send an email to Julia Rezende da Silva (Toxenlaces Editor) at juliarezende@usp.br or Rodrigo Gonçalves Queijo (Toxenlaces Editor Assistant) at rodrigogoncalvesqueijo@usp.br.

The views expressed in this Toxenlaces issue do not necessarily represent those of the Hispanic Organization of Toxicologists (HOT) or Society of Toxicology (SOT).