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UNISTEM DAY 2015 AT LUND UNIVERSITY



Organizers UniStem Day 2015. From left: Malin Parmar, PhD; Mattias Magnusson, PhD; Sofie Singbrant Söderberg, PhD; Sarah Warsi, PhD student; Christine Karlsson, PhD student; Paulina Pettersson, administration

BY KATARINA BRANZÈN - When UniStem Day was organized for the first time in Lund, by the Stem Cell Center, almost 180 high school students participated in the event. The aim for the day was to raise awareness about stem cell research, both through lectures and practical workshops.

During the European UniStem Day, March 13th, 2015, students from high schools in Lund were invited to visit stem cell researchers at Lund University. UniStem Day is held every year in various European countries and is a part of a broader initiative within the EU to increase young people's knowledge about stem cell research.

The program of the Lund UniStem Day included both lectures and interaction with UniStem participants in other countries. The students also visited research laboratories at BMC and were given the opportunity to test various practical skills such as culturing cells or looking at blood stem cells and transplanted cells in the brain in the microscope. Furthermore, it gave an insight into how stem cell

research and treatment are presented in media and film. Ethical issues, debate and discussion were also on the agenda, regarding for example questions of who should have the right to various treatments.

The day was very much appreciated by the attending students and teachers, a lot due to the practical exercises, where the participants got to test various research related tasks themselves. Several students expressed that it was exciting to see how researchers worked on a practical level and also to learn what it took to become a scientist.

UniStem Day is coordinated from Italy with over 50 universities participating across Europe. Malin Parmar, associate professor of neurobiology, is one of the scientists who was involved in bringing UniStem Day to Lund. Lund University hopes to be involved in organizing UniStem Day every year from now on.