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My main interests are erythrocyte aging during storage and the immunological side-effects of erythrocyte transfusion. The 53rd American Society of Hematology annual meeting in San Diego, CA, USA, provided the perfect opportunity to learn more about recent advances in both transfusion medicine and immunology. Both clinical and fundamental research were well represented on this huge conference (approximately 20,000 people) hosting hundreds of sessions and thousands of posters. Although overwhelming at first, the large number of parallel sessions allowed one to make a tailor made day-to-day program that suited your interests. The educational sessions, including those on transfusion medicine and microparticles, were particularly interesting as they gave a good overview of both the basics and current advances in that particular research field. During the conference I had to give two poster presentations on my own work. This led to interesting discussions and I got to meet new people in the field of red blood cell research. The oral presentation by Zhang et al entitled "Metabolomic Profiles Reveal Sphingosine-1-Phosphate As a Novel Allosteric Modulator of Hemoglobin-Oxygen Affinity and a Key Contributor to Pathophysiology of Sickle Cell Disease" was very interesting and gave me some valuable new leads for my own research. The "best of ASH" was an overview lecture given by several of the organizers pointing out what they thought were the most important advances in hematology presented at the ASH annual meeting 2011. It was well presented and very enlightening. Several of the plenary sessions broadened my (scientific) horizon and revealed some great advances in the field of hematology. Overall, I really enjoyed the ASH annual meeting and San Diego as a city.