

EDITORIAL

Meet our new editor: Dr Signe Altmäe



Dr Signe Altmäe is a researcher and leader of the Repro-UGR research team at the University of Granada, Spain, and a visiting researcher at the Karolinska Institute, Sweden.

Signe obtained her training in Biotechnology at the University of Tartu, Estonia. In 2010 she acquired her doctoral degree in Gene Technology at the University of Tartu under supervision of Professor Andres Salumets, focussing on understanding the role of genetic background (polymorphisms) in the response to hormonal stimulation in IVF protocols. During her doctoral studies, she started a close collaboration that included long research stays at the Karolinska Institute, Sweden. In 2011 she obtained a second doctoral degree in Medical Sciences at the Karolinska Institute under supervision of Professor Anneli Stavreus-Evers, applying single-gene and 'omics' approaches to understand endometrial gene expression in infertility and in embryo-endometrium interactions.

Studying at the Karolinska Institute, she met a researcher from Spain, and as love knows no borders, Spain was set as a new destination. There, she was successful in obtaining a Spanish Ministry post-doctoral grant for overseas researchers (2011) and in 2013 the Marie Curie Post-Doctoral Individual Fellowship, which enabled her to continue her research in Spain. In 2017 Signe was awarded the prestigious Spanish

Ramon y Cajal Researcher Grant, allowing her to become permanently established at the University of Granada, where she created a new research group, Repro-UGR (repro.ugr.es). After the completion of her research position in spring 2023, Signe will take up an Associate Professor position in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Faculty of Sciences, University of Granada.

Dr Altmäe's research interests have focussed on understanding molecular regulation of endometrial receptivity in health and disease, and molecular dialogue between the implanting embryo and the endometrium. Her recent research projects focus on unravelling the microbial profiles in female and male reproductive tracts, and the possible role of commensal microbes in endometrial function. Throughout all her research projects, Signe has been and is actively collaborating with several researchers around the world, principal collaborators being Professor Andres Salumets (University of Tartu/ Karolinska Institute), Professor Anneli Stavreus-Evers (Uppsala University, Sweden), and Dr Lusine Aghajanova (Stanford University, USA).

Signe has published over 80 scientific papers, five book chapters, and several articles for lay readers. She enjoys conveying research to the general public and is an enthusiastic participant in outreach activities such as European Researchers Night, Week of Science, Women in Science and presentations at local schools.

Her research contributions – in particular those aiming to unravel molecular embryo-endometrium cross-talk – have been recognized with a number of awards and distinctions, including the Diczfalusy Prize from the Karolinska Institute (Sweden), Young Investigator Prize of Translational

Reproductive Biology and Clinical Reproductive Endocrinology (New York, USA), Royan International Research Award in Reproductive Genetics (Iran), and Best Scientific Poster Award at the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) (Stockholm, Sweden).

Signe's keen interest in the role of reproductive genetics in health and disease has led her to participate in ESHRE activities such as developing ESHRE Guidelines for Endometriosis (2022), ESHRE Mentorship Program (ongoing), and as Junior Deputy at the ESHRE Special Interest Group (SIG) Reproductive Genetics (2015–2017). Currently, Signe is recognized through the various roles she has undertaken for the ESHRE SIG Reproductive Genetics as Senior Deputy and as a member of the SIG of Sociedad Española de Fertilidad (SEF).

Signe has considerable editorial experience, having served as an associate editor for *Molecular Human Reproduction*, an editor for *Frontiers of Endocrinology*, and as a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Assisted Reproduction and Genetics*. She was a regular reviewer for *RBMO* before joining the editorial panel in 2013 as a section editor for the area periconception, pregnancy and child outcomes. Her wealth of experience in scientific publishing, together with her broad view in the reproductive field and her international context, will be invaluable in her new role for *RBMO*.

To conclude in her own words, 'I am honoured to be joining the distinguished group of editors of *RBMO*, led by eminent scientists Professor Nick Macklon and Professor Juan Garcia-Velasco, together with the 'behind-the-scenes' team in the editorial office, and I am looking forward with excitement to the new experiences the role will offer!'