



Dr. Alice Accorsi, nominated by Timothy Corbin, was awarded the 10th ISTT Young Investigator Award at the [19thTransgenic Technology Meeting](#) in Zurich, Switzerland TT2025; April 24-27, 2025.

Dr. Accorsi obtained a Bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences and a Master's degree in Biology in 2009 and 2011, respectively, at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy). She was a graduate student in Professor Enzo Ottaviani's laboratory (Department of Life Sciences, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy) where she studied invertebrate immune system using a comparative approach. Dr. Accorsi successfully defended her PhD in Cell Biology and Evolution in March 2015.

To study complete regeneration of complex eyes, a feature absent in other model organisms Dr. Accorsi generated a new method to develop the first genetically modified apple snail (*Pomacea canaliculate*) and the first stable mutant line among gastropods. To achieve this goal, Dr. Accorsi designed a system to efficiently rear apple snails in laboratory settings, harvest several zygotes daily, microinject them and culture them to adults. None of these steps was trivial, but only after all of them got optimized, Dr. Accorsi used CRISPR/Cas9-mediated mutagenesis to perform the first apple snail genetic manipulation. Dr. Accorsi engineered mutations in *pax6*, a key transcription factor for eye development, and determined that *pax6* function is conserved in apple snails causing lack of eyes in the mutants. Not only this is a first evidence of gene function conservation between apple snail and vertebrates, but it is an incredible step forward in establishing apple snails as one of the few invertebrates where genetic manipulations are possible. This technical advancement represents a crucial step for having many more groups to adopt this animal for exploring many aspects of their biology as well as evolutionary history of gene functions and conservation of different elements.

Dr. Accorsi has now her independent laboratory, where more mutant lines are being generated to interrogate gene function during complex eye development and regeneration. The manuscript reporting this foundational research is "conditionally approved" to be published in Nature Communications, is already available as a preprint in bioRxiv (doi 10.1101/2024.01.26.577494) and has been featured by the scientific journal Development (doi 10.1242/dev.203163).

Without forgetting to thank Timothy very warmly for his nomination, we enthusiastically wish Alice all the success she deserves for her scientific career. Dr. Alice Accorsi presented her scientific achievements at the [19thTransgenic Technology Meeting](#) in Zurich, Switzerland (TT2025; April 24-27, 2025), where she will receive her award.