

Scholarship Report for AAD 2019

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Having obtained the AAD travel fellowship I was off to Washington DC for 5 days, leaving the unseasonably warm February winter in the UK for sub-zero temperatures in the States. Prior to leaving I downloaded the AAD mobile app which allows you to look through all the talks, peruse the slides and create a favourites list. I thought this exercise might help me clarify in my mind which sessions I wanted to attend and create my perfect list; however, with so many sessions all of great clinical value running in parallel I was only confused further.

This being my first time attending the event I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the event. Despite the size the number of staff on hand to help and guide or even help you cross the road made finding your way a lot easier! The other great feature of the meeting is that there is something available for every dermatologist. With my particular interests in medical dermatology there were multiple sessions where I picked up key clinical pearls to help my clinical practice and refreshers in topics that are less commonly encountered.

One of my favourite sessions was of dermoscopy, in particular inflammoscopy. Having hardly picked up my dermatoscope for patients with inflammatory conditions, apart from to check for the odd nail fold, I plan to use it for all conditions to help build up my knowledge but also to help me biopsy less and confidently diagnose more challenging cases. The meeting also helps provide trainees a great opportunity to build on areas of our curriculum that we get less exposed to in our daily practice such as hair and nail disease, cosmetic dermatology and venerology. For those who were unable to attend, many of the presentations are available on the AAD website, providing key summarised points for specific topics.

After the meeting I spent a few days at the George Washington Hospital alongside Professor Friedman. This was a great opportunity to see how dermatology practice differs from the UK, from the insurance billing to prescribing medications. In America patients are able to start biologic medications first line with mild to moderate disease and no pre-requisite trial of other systemic medications. Although the system does allow patients to be treated with newer more effective medications, it is very much insurance dependent and thus not standardised. Their use of allied healthcare professionals in helping to review and follow up patients was appealing and does offer an insight into how in the UK we could possibly optimise our resources to help meet our burgeoning demand on services.

Apart from a sighting and photo-op moment with the infamous author, Jean Bolognia, I would encourage anyone to walk around and take in the other sights Washington D.C has to offer. Like the American conference the grandiose scale of the buildings along the National Mall as well as the Lincoln and Washington Monument are quite spectacular and I would encourage anyone to spend some time at the numerous war memorials and museums.

I would like to thank the BAD and the AAD for organising and hosting such a wonderful meeting and their gracious hospitality. The opportunity to learn from international colleagues is always a refreshing experience as it keeps me updated in a variety of conditions, reminds me that there are multiple ways to manage diseases and the broad range of treatment options at our disposal.



Photos: Washington Monument (left), The Capitol (top), Professor Friedmann with Aadarsh Shah (right), Douglas Maslin, Jean Bolognia and Aadarsh Shah (bottom)