

BAD/DC Travel Fellowship - Summer 2018 AAD Annual Meeting 2019

Jonathan Kentley

I was lucky enough to have received a BAD bursary to attend the AAD conference for the second year running, and once again it didn't disappoint. After a 24 hour whirlwind visit to New York, I took the scenic train to Washington, DC- passing through Philadelphia and Baltimore.

The first thing that hit me was the gargantuan size of the conference- with almost 10,000 dermatologists attending from across the world. Thankfully there were also a few familiar faces and we quickly bumped into some of our UK registrar colleagues. On our first evening, the academy was kind enough to host a drinks reception for international attendees where we met Jean Bologna, who was most gracious and encouraged us all to take a selfie with her. We then moved on to GALDA event at the beautiful Hay Adams hotel overlooking the White House, where we chatted to some of the top dermatologists from across the US.

After much "networking" it was probably time to do some learning! The key issue with the AAD is that the schedule is so jam packed, that it's difficult to choose which sessions to attend. Thankfully, the jet lag woke us up with the sun and we were able to start early (the schedule starts at 7am...). I particularly enjoyed the session on the use of imaging and artificial intelligence in dermatology, led by Allan Halpern who is building a vast visual resource (dermoscopedia) to aid machine learning. We moved on to several sessions on cutaneous malignancy, including a fascinating discussion on the utility of topical hedgehog inhibitors for BCC (of interest to me, having recently worked on the phase II clinical trial).

Some of the most valuable talks we attended focused on complex medical dermatology, with scores of fascinating and unusual cases presented over a number of sessions. I broke off briefly to give my presentation on Kaposi sarcoma in our African cohort of renal transplant patients in London. Therapeutic hotline was, as usual, an enlightening session allowing me to stay abreast of the latest applications for biologics, JAK inhibitors and immunotherapy. The conference closed with "hot topics", where respective experts in their fields told us everything we could possibly need to know about... almost everything! The cherry on top of an educational and enjoyable weekend.

Although the conference had ended, but we managed to squeeze in some time to take in the impressive sights of DC, including Capitol Hill, the Lincoln Memorial, and Donald's house. Sadly, it was then time to head back to London- but not before disassembling and reassembling my luggage on the floor of JFK in a bid to avoid the excess baggage fee incurred by the 7kg of face creams I had accumulated over the preceding five days.

