

American Academy of Dermatology Meeting San Diego, California February 2018

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With the AAD app downloaded; travel pillow packed and Factor 50 poised, I was ready to live the 'American Dream'.

Naturally, I had heard from colleagues who had attended previous AAD annual meetings, that we were in for a treat. But no one and nothing could have prepared us for the intergalactic exploration exercise into dermatological outer space that we were about to embark on.

This interstellar journey began with a flight, that lasted about as long as an actual journey into Space I would imagine. Both facilitated by our friend Mr Branson of course. We flew over Greenland and The Rockies. I have to share one of these pictures, as it was just mind-blowing...actual GLACIERS!



We landed in San Diego, and the first thing that struck us...warmth! A truly welcomed feeling after escaping miserable February weather back home. We hailed a cab in true American style and made our way to our apartment in the Gaslamp district of San Diego. That evening we mainly ate large volumes of Mexican food in a sports bar which seemed to be televising every live sport taking place in the world...including the Winter Olympics Ice-skating Final in South Korea...a must see. We slept well that night, having had our first few bites of proper smashed avocado and nachos.

The next day, we grabbed a quick coffee and made a few grunting noises at the thought of 7.30am start times! None-the-less, we hastened through the palm-tree lined streets toward the epic convention centre. The programme was intense. More so from the perspective that there seemed to be so many useful talks, that one felt a true sense of Dermatology 'FOMO' (fear of missing out – for those of you who are unfamiliar with this millennial terminology).



Over the next few days, we attended 4 days worth of back-to-back sessions. Whilst this sounds tedious and laborious, it really was an absolute pleasure. The speakers were engaging, inspiring and practical, all in one go. The lectures contained real therapeutic pearls, that I certainly feel will change the way I deliver care to my patients. The latest evidence and research was reconstituted into a bite-size format, such that it could actually be used by your average evidence-based dermatologist.

Lectures that I very much enjoyed included sessions on: advances in melasma, vitiligo, acne management, alopecia areata, dupilumab in management of eczema, novel treatments in melanoma, DRESS manifestations and management and novel therapies on the horizon in dermatology. I chose these lectures based on the fact that they focus on areas that I can find challenging in day-to-day practice. Furthermore,

they highlight potential areas of development for the future.

Given that I have an evolving interest in cutaneous malignancy, skin cancer in the immunosuppressed population and patients with DNA repair disorders or tumour suppression



disorders, I very much enjoyed attending various lectures covering these areas. Of note, was a lecture on dermatological manifestations in the HIV populations, novel treatments in skin oncology and the Plenary session of CRISPR/Cas9 genomic editing in research.

Currently, I am involved in developing a trial looking at the role of Reflectance Confocal Microscopy in Skin Cancer. I attended the session focussing on imaging in skin cancer, and found it extremely educational. I will directly use the expertise gathered from these sessions to inform the study design and development of this project. It was an absolute delight to attend more personal and holistic lectures on burnout, wellness and psychological well-being, all of which were extremely pertinent to your average doctor working within the pressured NHS system.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the BAD and the Dowling Club, for awarding me with one of the Travel Fellowship awards. It really has opened my mind to work of the Global Dermatology community and has helped me contextualise

my local practice and how it is informed by international research efforts. I truly believe that in helping registrars attend international conferences such as the AAD meetings, this translates

into making us a more globally aware and well-informed Dermatology Consultant body for the future, which only stands to improve the care we offer our patients.

I couldn't end without a few memorable pics of our 'American Dream'.



