

AAD Washington DC 2016

As a recipient of a BAD SAS travel award, I set off for Washington DC in early March 2016 with some trepidation about what to expect. I have to say the whole experience was amazing – the conference was immense in every sense of the word – on a daily basis there were almost 10,000 delegates. Washington DC is a great city, full of museums, galleries, good eateries and kind people. A non- dermatological highlight was the Smithsonian Portrait and Art Gallery which was only 5 minutes walk from the convention centre, so perfect for a lunchtime break.

There were many memorable sessions, highlights for me personally were “Basic Dermoscopy” and many excellent lectures, including an entertaining quiz style presentation on unusual causes for leg ulcers, thought provoking discussions on psoriasis as the “visible killer” and the importance for our patients of “looking beyond the skin” when managing this chronic inflammatory dermatosis. New topical treatments for acne in the pipeline were discussed including dapsone gel, minocycline foam and nitric oxide gel. The lecture on zinc as a systemic therapy opened up therapeutic options for conditions such as acne, viral warts, hidradenitis suppurativa, vitiligo and alopecia areata.

I also had the opportunity to personally present a case in the Gross and Microscopic Symposium held on the first day of the conference, “An Unusual Case of Peeling Skin in an Infant”, which was somewhat nerve wracking and exciting at the same time – the room was packed with US Marines in full military uniform who were vocally supporting their colleagues who were also presenting, a unique experience to say the least!

I was privileged to attend the 5th Annual British Dermatology Reunion held on the Sunday evening, where the ninth edition of the seminal dermatology text Rook’s Textbook of Dermatology was launched with great aplomb – it was a fantastic opportunity to meet with fellow British dermatologists to celebrate this with drinks and canapes!

One of the most interesting aspects of attending an international meeting such as the AAD is to meet with colleagues and discuss issues which appear to be common themes for all – such as access to expensive medications, dealing with increasing patient demands and expectations – it was however humbling to realise how lucky we are to work within the system that we have in the UK – where good quality healthcare is available to all, free at the point of use, regardless of income or insurance, and that the NHS is a precious service that should be valued and treasured by us all. I was also struck during my time at the meeting, by the wealth of British research presented there that was undertaken and published in the UK by dermatologists, young and old, and the importance of continuing this in the NHS of the future.

I left Washington at the end of the conference on a high of learning positivity which I hope will last for some time to come – I have already shared some AAD pearls with colleagues in my Department at one of our regular educational meetings.

I would like to thank the British Association of Dermatologists for giving me the opportunity to attend such a meeting and would encourage my fellow SAS colleagues to apply for a travel award in 2016!

Dr Alison Godwin

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