

BAD/DC Travel Fellowship – Summer 2017

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I arrived in San Diego a few days before the AAD meeting, to visit to the Gallo lab at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) in La Jolla. The main interest of the lab is the molecular basis of skin defence. Professor Richard Gallo and his team were very welcoming and I was invited to sit in on several of their group sessions.

I attended their journal club and lab meetings. The journal club discussed the role of the LYVE-1 receptor in dendritic cells entering lymph vessels and as a potential therapeutic target for limiting inflammation and immune activation. I was also privileged to hear presentations from post-doctoral researchers on their projects, notably on the link between the cathelicidin peptide LL37 and U1RNA, which is released from cells after ultraviolet exposure.

I joined the UCSD dermatology residents' teaching session during my stay in La Jolla. The teaching session focused on difficult revision topics (hair, nails, genodermatosis and paediatrics) and case studies, led by senior residents. The junior residents had their practice Boards exam in a few weeks and received a high level of support from their senior colleagues. Several cases from recent ward consultations were discussed, including recurrent scabies, polyarteritis nodosa and echthyma gangrenosum. I enjoyed participating in this study session and talking to this group gave me insight into the American medical system.

Everyone is eligible for emergency medical care, but those without insurance cannot have treatment for chronic conditions. The introduction of Obamacare sought to address that to some degree, but this will likely be phased out under the current administration. One of the case reports discussed was lost to follow up as her insurance became invalid. I find it shocking that such a large proportion of Americans do not have access to healthcare, which we currently take for granted in the UK.

From La Jolla, I transferred to San Diego for the AAD meeting and also went to the pre-conference Photomedicine symposium. The scale of the San Diego Convention Center is vast and we were spoilt for choice with excellent educational opportunities running simultaneously. I attended sessions on hidradenitis suppurativa, paediatric dermatology, medical dermatology, dermoscopy, and clinical/diagnostic pearls.

I presented 2 cases of necrobiotic xanthogranuloma (NXG) treated with thalidomide in the Gross and Microscopic Symposium. NXG is rare and I was surprised to see a case in one of the complex medical dermatology sessions I attended. I also had a poster presentation on cutaneous metastases in renal cell carcinoma.

San Diego is a fantastic conference venue and a beautiful city to explore. It was a dermatology registrar trip of a lifetime and I am grateful to the BAD for their contribution towards this wonderful educational opportunity.

