

## **BAD/DC Travel Fellowship - Winter 2018**

### **Sarah Hogan**

My thanks go to the British Association for Dermatology and the Dowling Club for granting me the 2018 Travel Bursary. The funds enabled me to attend the 23rd Regional Dermatology Training Centre (RDTC) International Conference in Moshi, Tanzania, to present a talk on the use of WhatsApp in the tropics. The project addressed the need to deliver equal healthcare access in resource-poor settings using sustainable, cost-effective systems of communication. I had worked on the assignment with members of the International Foundation for Dermatology (IFD), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Academy of Dermatovenereology (EADV) Task Force for Tropical Dermatology. The topic was chosen because in November 2017, the WHO Regional Office for Africa and the United Nations International Telecommunications Union (ITU) signed an agreement to collaboratively enhance healthcare in Africa with the use of digital technology. My talk described the context of this agreement and advocated the use of WhatsApp to effectively deliver dermatology care and training in resource-poor settings, with particular focus on patient safety.

During the three-day conference, my presentation was one of many from dermatologists across the globe. Other topics included People With Albinism (PWA), neglected tropical diseases as well as country- and disease-specific updates. I was also invited to attend the 4th African Dermatopathology Conference, which highlighted the paucity of dermatopathologists across many African countries, partly due to the lack of CME opportunities. Encouragingly, the conference had its largest attendance rates to date, and by the end of the week the first official African Dermatopathology WhatsApp group had been established. It has now welcomed 52 members from across the continent, who exchange dermatopathology tips, queries and quizzes almost daily.

Finally, the trip allowed me to fulfil a longstanding ambition, which was to visit the RDTC itself. The centre is lead by an enthusiastic and passionate faculty who teach an equally committed group of RDTC trainees. Meeting the RDTC trainees opened up my eyes to the daily struggles that they face in clinic. The trainees are talented, well read and the caseload incredibly interesting, but unfortunately the doctors don't have the same training opportunities or resources as we do here, despite the enthusiasm of their seniors. The trip was an enriching experience that I will draw on when working on a collaborative educational project, which aims to bridge that gap.

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