

## **BAD Travel Fellowship Report**

Dr Esther Burden-Teh, ST4 Nottingham

The American Academy of Dermatology Conference 2013 was hosted in Miami Beach, Florida. This was the Academy's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Miami Beach was swarming with attendees. With our AAD conference 'apps' downloaded we were ready to explore one of the largest dermatological conventions.

The programme was bursting with forums, discussion groups and courses to attend. 'Key Surgical Principles' and 'Vasculitis and Vasculopathy: An Update' both contained many practical pearls to incorporate into clinical practice. The first session covered surgical danger zones, an approach to stratify the risk of infection and particular considerations when operating on special sites. The second taught a systematic approach to vasculitis, correlating clinical and histopathological findings and discussed many interesting cases. One of the more memorable cases presented was a patient who developed dramatic facial purpura as a consequence of the use of cocaine adulterated with levamisole.

Paediatric psoriasis is an area of dermatology where published literature is limited. The forum on 'Paediatric Psoriasis: Systemic Therapy and Beyond' presented an insightful update on important developments in paediatric psoriasis. Dr Wilson Liao discussed the move towards genome-wide association studies to investigate causative genes in psoriasis. Interestingly, genes associated with psoriasis can also be associated with cardiovascular risk factors and individuals with earlier onset psoriasis are likely to have a greater genetic burden. Dr Amy Paller presented her recently published work the 'Association of Pediatric Psoriasis Severity With Excess and Central Adiposity: An International Cross-Sectional Study'. This concluded that there is a stronger association of obesity and psoriasis in childhood-onset vs adult-onset psoriasis and the association of central adiposity is greatest in children with severe psoriasis. However, the underlying basis for the relationship between psoriasis and adiposity is not understood. Dr John Koo discussed the safety concerns regarding phototherapy in relation to skin cancer. He supported the use of the 308-nm excimer laser to give suprathreshold phototherapy, thereby inducing a faster and longer remission of psoriatic plaques.

Vitiligo is a subject of growing research interest. 'The Management of the Vitiligo Patient' discussed many therapeutic options for the treatment of vitiligo. Dr Pearl Grimes presented the successful use of afamelanotide and narrowband UVB phototherapy to induce repigmentation. The hospital has also increased access to phototherapy through the use of home phototherapy units. Other therapeutic options included surgical interventions with skin grafting or melanocyte transplantation, targeted phototherapy with excimer laser and depigmentation. All these options are not widely used in the UK.

The course 'Fundamentals of Dermoscopy' was a fantastic introduction to the subject. The day started on the basic theory behind dermoscopy and the role of polarized light, moving on to teach about key findings in melanoma, melanocytic naevi, acral lesions, non-pigmented lesions and benign pigmented lesions. The afternoon was full of dermoscopy cases starting at an easy level but quickly becoming much harder. At the end of the session we were all a little dazed but my dermoscopy skills have definitely improved.

A visit to Miami Beach would not be complete without a tour of the art-deco architecture, this could even be seen in the design of the Conference Centre and Fillimore Theatre next door. A short stroll down Ocean Drive and Lincoln Avenue enables you to fully appreciate the pastel coloured curved buildings set against the bright blue sky. The area of South Beach is now a protected historic district and despite a few planning mishaps the area is now preserved. I would like to thank the British Association of Dermatologists for the generous travel fellowship to attend the American Academy of Dermatologists Conference. This has been an excellent educational opportunity and inspired me further in my career as a dermatologist.