

AAD 2015 Fellowship Award Report

Receiving the AAD-BAD fellowship award allowed me to attend the American Academy of Dermatologists annual conference held at the Moscone Center in San Francisco from March 20-24th 2015. This was the first time I attended the AAD annual conference and also my first ever international clinical conference since practising medicine. This generous fellowship award included registration fees, attendance at a seminar of my choice and \$1000 towards accommodation.

The award also included an invitation to the international delegate's pre-conference dinner on March 19th which was attended by junior dermatologists training all over the world. My table hosted trainees from Chile, India and Brazil in addition to AAD board members, including Dr. Karen McKoy who is Assistant Professor of clinical dermatology at Harvard Medical School. We spoke about my area of interest, contact allergy, and had an interesting discussion comparing differences between training in America versus the UK- it was reassuring to hear that similar to the UK, the dermatology clinics in America also overrun due to the heavy work load. Dr. McKoy gave me her contact details and encouraged me to apply for a fellowship in Harvard which is not something I would have considered prior to attending the AAD.

The AAD offers a dizzying array of focus sessions, courses, workshops, forums, discussion groups, symposiums and board exam preparation sessions, which is almost overwhelming as there are so many interesting topics to choose from. As several sessions occur simultaneously throughout the very large conference center, I found the conference app to be invaluable in organising my own timetable of sessions. I attended a variety of seminars across the dermatology curriculum including: Contact dermatitis: concepts and controversies; Dermoscopy: it's time for a quiz; Neonatal dermatology: case based discussions; Chronic urticaria and angioedema: what's new in pathogenesis and treatment; Cosmetics; The approach to the patient with cutaneous T cell lymphoma; Skin signs of internal disease: case based challenges and Dermatological manifestations of HIV and AIDS, to name a few. I attended the infectious diseases course which included a full day of interesting presentations on tropical diseases such as leishmaniasis, trypanosomiasis and onchocerciasis.

The sessions were interactive and encouraged audience participation which is a unique approach compared to most conferences. Speakers who engaged with the audience facilitated a more informal and inviting atmosphere which is a good learning environment. My experience at the AAD is like no other conference I have attended and has benefited me in multiple ways. Firstly, the conference offers something for everyone- clinicians, surgeons, academics and scientists alike. Secondly, the sheer enormity of the educational programme was impressive and I don't believe many other conferences can rival an attendance record of over 10,000 delegates. Lastly, the lectures are pitched at the right level for registrars and are 'trainee focused' with the presenter often mentioning that the topic is relevant for the dermatology board exams which was also useful for my preparation for the SCE this October. I am grateful to the BAD for this experience and would love to attend the AAD again in the future. A thought to take away from the AAD is perhaps the BAD could consider offering an SCE revision session for trainees during the next annual meeting?

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