



## British Association of Dermatologist Medical student elective prize

Elective report from my placement at the National Institutes of Health

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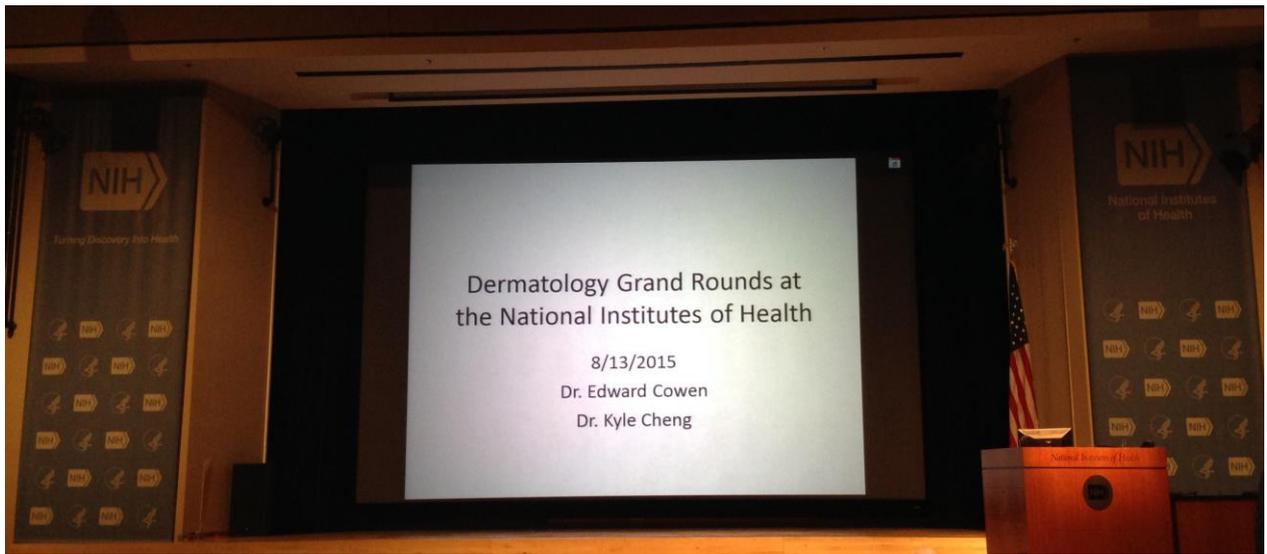
I was delighted to have been awarded the summer elective prize from the BAD in which I undertook a 4 week elective at the National Institutes of health in the USA. This opportunity allowed me to travel and work at a world class institution in which I was based in the pathology department. Pathology as a specialty which many depend on, and this is most prevelant in dermatology. I gained valuable experience in pathological research currently being conducted and had the opportunity to work in the pathology department including shadowing a dermatopathologist. The ground breaking research was absolutely phenomenal and the coinciding clinical experience allowed me to view this work in practice. I was delighted to have the chance to work with Dr Markku Miettinen and his team whose research includes looking into the role of Sry-related HMg-Box 10 (SOX 10) gene(1) and CD 171 in tumours. Furthermore, I was honoured to have spent time with Dr Edward Cowen, head of the dermatology consultation service at the NIH.



One of the more interesting topics currently being researched involved the SOX 10 gene. A commonly studied gene, there has been a significant amount of evidence suggesting its role in melanomas. Sox 10 is a nuclear transcription factor which plays a major role in melanocyte development. It has recently been argued as being a underutilised marker for melanoma diagnosis as SOX 10 was found in 97% of malignant melanomas(2) and has been shown to be a comparable marker to S100 in identifying metastases in melanoma(3). Improper regulation has been recently suggested in playing a critical role in melanoma and has been shown to be expressed in both primary and metastatic melanoma(4).

This experience also allowed me to undertake clinical work which was mainly in the pathology department allowing me to gain a great variability of experiences. This included participating in sign outs, which involved pathology slides from trainees being scrutinised by the attending's (consultants) and diagnoses being made. It was fascinating to see cases being sent from other national and even international centres due to world renowned specialists working at the institution. Furthermore, a large amount of time was spent with the dermatopathologists looking into cases of strange pathology, as well as being able to attain valuable teaching in this area through direct teaching and via resident teaching sessions. I was further introduced to one of the dermatologists whom I spent time in the clinical setting, seeing rare conditions such as hyper IGE syndromes with many of these patients travelling from as far as Canada to be seen. Furthermore, attending grand-rounds was a great experience allowing me to participate and witness the important and valuable nature of such meetings in advancing patient care through a team approach. Finally, hands on experience included grossing of specimens as well as participating in 2 autopsies, which also involved a patient who had suffered from combined immunodeficiency syndrome. Finally, the opportunities to witness the multi-disciplinary team approach enabled me to understand the importance of this approach and the vital role this plays in the future of medicine.

This has been an invaluable experience and without this funding, I would not have been able to participate in this wonderful opportunity. I am absolutely delighted with the continued support from the BAD and cannot thank the BAD enough for this prize which will be paramount in allowing me to reach my goal of becoming a dermatologists.



## References



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