

I was thrilled to receive the BAD scholarship to attend the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) 71th Annual Meeting in Miami Beach, Florida. This was my first participation in an international dermatology symposium, outside Europe. The venue in Miami Beach Convention Centre was huge and slightly intimidating but there was ample staff to guide us in the right direction. After a while I mastered the map of the convention center like the back of my hand!

The program book was packed with 200+ pages of scientific sessions. I was certainly spoilt for choice in selecting which sessions to attend.

On the first morning of AAD meeting, I was slightly nervous about presenting at the Gross and Microscopic Session in front of a hall full of international and expert dermatologists. However, the chair of the session was friendly and reassuring. Gradually, I calmed down and was proud to stand there as a UK dermatology trainee, presenting my case of an infant with coexisting rapidly involuting congenital hemangioma and myofibromata. The presentation went splendidly. It was also interesting to listen, learn and reflect on other presentations of interesting and educational cases encountered by my fellow dermatology colleagues. My second presentation (poster) on 'Pseudotumour formation following a metal on polyethylene hip implant due to hypersensitivity reaction to metal ion release' was well received and provoked interesting and relevant discussions around this topic. I am very thankful that my consultants in Dundee had supported me and prepared me well for the presentation sessions.

With so many sessions to choose from, one can find it difficult to decide which to attend. I would highly recommend the session on 'Practical Management of Atypical Melanocytic Lesions', which combine useful advice on management of these difficult lesions with an interactive session involving clinical and dermoscopy images projected on individual computer screens in front of every attendee.

I thoroughly enjoyed the session on reflectance confocal microscopy- a new investigative modality that I believe will be an essential tool in every dermatologist's office in the future. The session on cutaneous lupus and dermatomyositis provided both practical and useful pearls on the subject. Other useful sessions I enjoyed were topics on 'Advanced pediatric dermatology- entertaining topics on spitz nevus and cutaneous effect of young bone marrow transplant patients, infantile hemangioma syndromes and the really interesting but scary issue of endocrine disrupters molecules in topical treatments'.

What I also found interesting was the session on medical and aesthetic dermatology in skin of color, a comprehensive talk on personalized rejuvenation, and hot topics on AIDS and STDs, photodynamic therapy- with topics on usage of PDT in skin of color, in inflammatory and acne conditions. The 'New emerging therapies' session was held in the impressive Filmore Theatre of Miami Beach focusing on therapy for scars/keloids, antifungal therapy, alopecia and for diseases of the male.

The beauty of the BAD scholarship was that it entitled me to a full day course- I chose the course on 'Fundamentals of Dermoscopy'. It was splendid and featured speakers who were experts in this field. The program was well spaced out and despite the absence of coffee breaks, it held everyone's attention span right till the end. I also enrolled for a half-day course on Cutaneous Melanoma Guidelines. Although it was discussion based around the American guidelines, it was helpful for me to reflect and compare the practices of melanoma management in the UK, USA and Australia.

There certainly was a huge array of topics on discussions in the AAD. Sessions start at 715am on most days, and run continuously till 5pm or later. With so much to learn, it is easy to neglect what Miami Beach has to offer. However, the city is indeed vibrant and lively. The soft white sand stretches as far as the eye can see, on a backdrop of blue, clear water. I am not usually keen on beaches but, even I, couldn't resist a walk along Ocean Drive. Lincoln Street has abundance of lovely and tasty food outlets and restaurants which serve a spread of Italian, Mediterranean, Asian and local cuisine. Espanola Way just a short walk from the Miami Beach Convention Centre features Spanish and Cuban eateries. The weather was bright and sunny most days with a cool ocean breeze, which can be chilly at night. I did feel like I was in paradise! I am very thankful to BAD and AAD for giving me the opportunity to enrich both my mind and soul!

Dr Yit Nah Lau.  
ST6 Dermatology  
Ninewells Hospital and Medical School, Dundee, Scotland.