

An eye-opening experience in Miami, Florida

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AAD Registration Scholarship recipient 2013

Receiving an AAD Registration Scholarship is a privilege for a dermatology trainee like myself. I was so excited to attend the 71st AAD annual meeting in Miami, Florida between the 1st and 5th of March 2013. Even though the weather within the first few days of the meeting was a bit too cold and wet for Miami at this time of year, it did not dampen my high spirits in the least.

I started my journey very early in the morning of the 28th of February and arrived in Miami in the evening of the same day so that I could attend a focus session on the next day at 7.45 am. The venue for this year's meeting was the Miami Beach convention centre which has 4 huge halls with a large exhibition area. I got totally lost for at least 15 minutes before I could navigate to the right room. There were several focus sessions on common and practical dermatology topics every morning which I found very useful especially for trainees. The only problem was that I sometimes could not decide which session to attend as there were interesting topics happening at the same time or had to run from one room to another to be able to attend particular talks I wanted. I was very impressed with the session of "Basics of nail surgery" because the speaker presented basic techniques of nail surgery using a clinical scenario followed by an explicit video clip of each technique for attendees' better understanding. Other focus sessions I attended were of topics on medical dermatology in patients of coloured skin, neonatal dermatology and cosmetic dermatology.

As part of the scholarship, each recipient receives a complimentary, one-day course of their choice during the AAD meeting which I chose "Advanced dermoscopy". All speakers are internationally-renowned dermoscopists and each has their own systemic approach in dermoscopy that I found very useful to adapt to my own day to day practice. I also paid a bit extra to attend a half-day live demonstration session of how to use aesthetic tools and techniques in common cosmetic and medical problems. i.e Bell's palsy which was worth every penny. I also had a chance to see these techniques applied again up close and personal during my visit to the Dermatology department in Texas Tech University Hospital, Lubbock, Texas where my sister, who works as a consultant gastroenterologist there, arranged an observership for me after the AAD meeting. This has given me better perception of how common cosmetic procedures are carried out.

There were also other symposia and forums on various topics in Dermatology, Leadership and Management skills, Administrative skills which I attended a session called "When bad things happen to good doctors". It basically focused on risk stratification and management in medical and surgical dermatology and the talks were delivered by different speakers on a variety of risks that can occur in practice and prevention of common pitfalls in Dermatology.

Each day after the meeting, I did have some time to explore the neighbourhood of South beach Miami with a registrar colleague from Dundee who also attended this meeting this year. We mainly went for exotic foods in restaurants with outdoor seating (not common in Scotland), window shopping and people watching which was fun and different experience.

The AAD meeting has a lot to offer academically plus opportunities for informal social networking and to meet international attendees and exchange experiences in Dermatology. The BAD also organised a reunion evening event on Sunday 03/03/13 for BAD members at the AAD so that we could socialise, meet up with other familiar faces from the UK and have a bit of a drink.

Overall, this trip provided me with new experiences during my training and I have a lot of things to reflect on afterwards. I would really like to thank my consultants, Drs Fleming, Ibbotson and Bryden for their support of my trip to this annual AAD meeting.