

NIHR/BAD Travel Award Report
Society for Investigative Dermatology – 75th Annual Meeting
Scottsdale, Arizona, 11-14th May 2016

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I was thrilled and extremely grateful to receive a 2016 NIHR/BAD travel award to attend the 75th Annual Meeting of the Society for Investigative Dermatology (SID), held this year in Scottsdale, Arizona. Founded in 1937, the SID aims to promote research and education in the United States, and its Annual Meeting welcomes participation by investigators from around the world to present and learn about the latest, pioneering research taking place in the field of dermatology. The meeting was very well attended this year, meaning that the conference hotel was sold out for the first time ever, surpassing the expectations of the organisers. Hopefully this is an indication of the expanding importance of dermatology research and its ability to attract researchers to the field.

I was selected to give an oral presentation on *Herpes Zoster Vaccination: Effect on VZV-specific Immune Responses in Ageing Skin*, based on the research that I have been undertaking at University College London as part of my PhD in immunodermatology, under the supervision of Professors Arne Akbar and Malcolm Rustin. It was exciting to observe that the audience included many of the leading researchers in the field of skin resident memory T cells. The talk went well and I hope that the audience questions at the end demonstrated a keen interest in my work. Afterwards I was pleased to be able to speak to other early career researchers with whom I could share ideas and insights.

The conference programme contained a stimulating breadth of topics and speakers and presented an excellent opportunity for learning about the latest developments in dermatology research. The multitude of interesting presentations during the concurrent sessions meant that I had to be particularly selective about the talks I attended. Some of the conference highlights were plenary session talks by distinguished speakers on topics as varied as *Hair Follicles as Regulators of Immune Homeostasis*, *What Transgenic Mice Can Teach Us About Psoriasis Pathogenesis*, *Progress in Immune-Mediated Control of Malignant Disease*, and *Cutaneous Mosaicism: Clinical Presentations and Pathogenic Mechanisms*. During the conference I was fascinated to note that recent advances in our understanding of immune mechanisms of skin disease have opened up the possibilities for immunomodulatory therapies in dermatology; specifically, I was intrigued to learn about innovations in immune checkpoint inhibitors for advanced melanoma, and Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitor therapy for alopecia areata.

The location in Arizona was special, with the desert climate giving rise to daily temperatures in the high 30s, and a stunning mountainous backdrop visible in the horizon. Overall the conference was highly educational, rewarding and enjoyable, and I strongly encourage other trainees to apply for BAD travel awards in future.