

AAD Registration Scholarship, 2018 Annual Meeting, San Diego, California

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I was recently afforded the fantastic opportunity to leave wintry London and travel to the warmer climes of Southern California for the American Academy of Dermatology Annual Meeting in San Diego. Prior to the commencement of the meeting, I spent a day reading slides with a consultant dermatopathologist at the Scripps Clinic in La Jolla, which was founded almost a century ago by an English lady philanthropist. A significant proportion of the cases reviewed included melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers, as may be expected for that part of the world, plus a slow Mohs for atypical fibroxanthoma, which gave me new insight into the histopathological analysis of these specimens. We also discussed 40 additional teaching cases covering other tumours and inflammatory diseases.

At the international scholarship dinner the following day, I had the opportunity to meet other trainees and dermatologists from around the world, including doctors practising in Egypt and Nicaragua, who told me about training and working in dermatology in their countries.

The first full day of the meeting kicked off at 7.30am, with an interesting lecture on the “horses and zebras” of inpatient dermatology, followed by a two-hour session on complex paediatric dermatology. In the afternoon, it was patch testing pearls, more medical dermatology cases then paediatric vulvar disease. Over the following days, I mixed sessions covering specific disease groups in detail e.g. the neutrophilic dermatoses, with more general updates in the field of medical and paediatric dermatology. I attended talks on the cutaneous signs of genetic and acquired internal disease, as well as specialised symposia e.g. dermatology in skin of colour. Other aspects of the job were considered in a session on productivity and some light relief was available in the form of the gameshow-based session “Resident Jeopardy” where teams of two representing different training programmes competed against each other to answer dermatology-themed questions. Using the half-day course ticket included in this scholarship, I attended the updates in hair disorders session, which was particularly interesting and covered scarring and non-scarring alopecia and new therapeutic modalities.

The conference location was close to the Gaslamp Quarter, an area of town known for its diverse dining options and there was time for exploring during the lunchbreak and after the meeting ended in the evenings.

This meeting was a great opportunity to improve my dermatological knowledge, learn about the practice of dermatology in the US and meet other international delegates. Many thanks to the BAD for financially supporting this very informative educational experience.

