

Capitalising on Dermatology in the Capital: My Experience at the AAD 2019

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The experience of attending the five day American Academy of Dermatology conference in Washington D.C. is something I will not forget, and I am very grateful to the BAD scholarship for enabling me to take part. It has certainly been a busy five days with a wealth of information (hopefully) taken in: every day was packed full of high quality lectures and discussions starting at 0730.

Dr Aadarsh Shah and I flew in to the capital and enjoyed a free afternoon experiencing the sights – the Lincoln memorial, Washington monument, and Whitehouse were highlights. We spent time reflecting on our training by the pool of reflection, before heading off to the AAD scholarship dinner where we were presented with our certificate and badge. It was here that I met the world famous Dr Jean Bolognia and AAD president Dr Suzanne Olbricht. The conference had yet to start but I was already receiving welcome dermatology tips and career advice – as well as a strong recommendation to visit the air and space museum, which I later did before flying home (unfortunately not in one of the many rockets on display).



Dr Aadarsh Shah and I
outside the Whitehouse

Our first day at the
AAD





At the scholarship dinner with (the famous) Dr Jean Bologna, and 2018/19 AAD president Dr Suzanne Olbricht

The conference centre was something to behold – over two buildings and five floors – all teeming with enthusiastic students, registrars and consultants from around the world. Despite the c. 10,000 attendees, I was regularly bumping into friendly faces from the BAD – it was lovely to catch up with so many dermatologists from this side of the pond. All comments from colleagues about their conference experience were hugely positive – we were learning so much and inspired by what we were hearing.

I carefully plotted my route through the conference to try and make the most of every session that was available. Despite this, it was inevitable that I would miss some excellent forums. I enjoyed practical sessions on dermoscopy and surgery – including a discussion forum on ‘how would you reconstruct this defect’ which was extremely engaging. I attended 3 different sessions on ‘complex medical dermatology’, as well as a grueling but practically useful session on an area of particular interest to me as a dual dermatology and clinical pharmacology trainee – ‘systemic medications for the dermatologist’.

As well these personal practice-changing sessions, it was fascinating to hear about the latest areas of research and the multitude of new treatments arriving within the field of dermatology – for both inflammatory and oncological diseases. The recent advances within our amazing and complex specialty are highlighted by use of words such as “near cure” in a metastatic melanoma lecture, and standards such as “PASI100” being presented in psoriasis lectures. There was also much excitement regarding the role of JAKinhibitors in a multitude of conditions. Not only this, but a symposium on the role of artificial intelligence in dermatology was packed out – we are clearly intrigued to know how we can work with new technologies (see BAD report by Dr Beth Wright).

I look forward to summarising updates and clinical pearls to my department, and hope to be back at the AAD again in the near future. I strongly recommend registrar colleagues to apply for this award and make the most of what the AAD has to offer.