

BAD/DC Travel Fellowship – Winter 2019
The World Congress of Dermatology, Milan

Dr Eimear O'Brennan

It was a great honour to be awarded a BAD/DC Travel fellowship to attend the World Congress of Dermatology in the beautiful city of Milan, Italy from the 10th-15th June 2019. It was a fantastic opportunity to fly to warmer climates and leave the British summer behind in order to attend this conference that occurs once every 4 years. There were so many learning opportunities available from experts from around the world running in parallel lectures that I had serious fear of missing out. Sessions commenced early and many of the 18.000 delegates were content to queue at early hours in order to attend lectures on what is new and the ongoing research being carried out in our speciality.



I have a specific interest in skin diseases of pregnancy and therefore attended these lectures. I learned about the physiological changes and the influence of hormonal changes on the skin and how to put what we are seeing in pregnant patients into perspective and distinguish normal from abnormal disease. Specific common dermatoses of pregnancy and skin infections in pregnancy were also a highlight of the session. I also learned a lot about moles and melanoma in pregnancy and how to manage a diagnosis of melanoma in pregnancy. New approaches to drug safety in pregnancy and how to interpret safety data and categorisation of medications for use in pregnancy were also a highlight of these lecture series. Further discussions took place on the cosmetic problems of pregnancy and their management.

I attended lectures many lectures throughout the course of the conference on hair and nail diseases. There were some very informative sessions on hair loss and hair surgery over the course of the conference. Recommendations from the United States suggest an integrated behavioural approach for the patient with alopecia areata. There were detailed scientific lectures on g/d T-cells and ILC's in the pathogenesis of AA. There were some interesting discussions on trichoscopy as a valuable tool in preventing diagnostic errors in alopecia areata, the life cycle of AA and the associated clinical implications. Androgenetic alopecia was also discussed including the systemic

causes of hair loss, an update in the management of the condition and the interesting concept of post finasteride syndrome which can be very debilitating for patients. Further lectures took place on cicatricial alopecia, female pattern hair loss, prostaglandins and hair loss and the patho-mechanism of permanent hair loss after chemotherapy including primary mobilisation and depletion of hair follicle stem cells. There were some interesting discussions on the long-term results of hair surgery and hair transplantation from a European and American perspective. Indeed, the future looks very promising for the treatment of hair diseases.

There were also a series of lectures on the management of nail diseases which offered some very good clinical pearls for management. I learned a significant amount about conducting nail dermoscopy; the procedure and signs, onychomycosis, inflammatory diseases affecting the nails, melanocytic and non-melanocytic nail tumours and how to manage nail pigmentation. The pros and cons of intraoperative dermoscopy of the pigmented and unpigmented nail and surgery of the nail were debated. Further teaching of surgical techniques of the nail included, shave biopsies and grafts of the nail unit. There was an interesting lecture on clinical patterns and dermoscopy of nail dyschromia in dark skin, dressing for wounds of the nail unit, diagnostic nail biopsies, when and how to use it, when and how to operate for nail surgery and tips on undertaking a nail biopsy.

The opportunity to attend the world congress of dermatology in Milan afforded the ability to network with other dermatologists from around the world. We can learn a lot from each other and make important connections for future practice. I am therefore very grateful to the BAD for providing the financial assistance to attend this event.

