

Travelling Fellowship Report

I was awarded the BSDS travel fellowship in November 2007. This helped facilitate my recent visit to Southern California where I observed Dr Christopher Zachary's dermatology practise in Irvine and attended the Hugh Greenway Annual Cutaneous Surgery and Superficial Anatomy Course in San Diego.

Dr Zachary is professor and chair of dermatology at the University of California Irvine. He initially trained at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine in London before completing his dermatology training at King George and St Thomas' Hospital. He subsequently worked in Michigan and San Francisco. He is a lead in research and clinical work developing and using laser-assisted treatments to rejuvenate aging and damaged skin with additional expertise in skin cancer work, dermatoplastics, reconstruction, laser and cosmetic surgery.

My time in Irvine was primarily based in a private dermatology clinic away from the main hospital. Staff included 7 'attendings' (consultant dermatologists), 2 'residents' (specialist registrars), 4 nurses and one medical student. The unit had 9 consulting rooms, 2 theatres and 1 light therapy room. Patients seen in the department had a variety of inflammatory dermatoses, skin lesions, venous disease and concerns with regards to aging skin and their appearance. Treatment modalities offered included topical and systemic agents, lasers (excimer, fraxel, PDL, KTP, IPL and endovenous ablation), surgery (conventional and Mohs'), in additions to peels, fillers and botox.

This was a great way to appreciate the running of a different medical system. It introduced me to the range cosmetic modalities that we as UK trainees may not otherwise appreciate as this is not an integral part of our training at present. My final week was spent attending the 25th Hugh Greenway Course. This course is run by a large faculty of specialist from several different dermatology and ophthalmic departments throughout the United States. It is an excellent opportunity to review, consolidate and expand your knowledge of head and neck anatomy, surgical repair techniques and cosmetic procedures such as lasers, other resurfacing techniques, fillers and botox. This is not for the faint hearted though – if you want to visit the area you will have to allow extra days in order to do this! The programme runs from 7am until 9pm and offers a variety of lectures (using powers point, video and live demonstrations), small group tutorials and demonstrations with practical sessions in the university laboratories on cadavers.

Despite the intensity of the course it offers an excellent means of meeting colleagues from several countries, allowing you to appreciate the different demands on dermatology services worldwide.

Admittedly it is an expensive course and a long way to travel, but well worth the effort. I am very grateful to the BSDS for the travel fellowship as without this it would have been difficult to fund my visit. I would strongly recommend organising such an experience. It will undoubtedly be beneficial to my future career in dermatology.

Dr Samantha Hann

Cardiff