

ADNA USA/Canada Scholarship

I am writing this report from the airport after attending the 41st Annual Dermatology Nursing Convention in Savannah, Georgia this week. I chose to attend this conference because it is directed for nurses and I thought it would benefit me the most, I have no regrets.

I flew into Georgia on Monday February 6th and had a free day walking around and exploring the beautiful Southern city of Savannah. It is a gorgeous place with a lot of interesting history and delicious food.

Tuesday morning the conference kicked off with a great talk from the president of the American Nursing Association discussing the theme of the year: being an agent of change. This is an interesting theme and after the opening speaker I understood exactly why the board chose that theme. He discussed the many famous nurses over the years who have advocated for change in the system and the profession to further improve care and working conditions. He touched on innovation, leadership, advocacy and the future of nursing and truly inspired each person there to strive to be better.

The presentations on Tuesday discussed pediatric dermatology emergencies, skin conditions in skin of colour, hidradenitis suppurativa, atopic dermatitis and a patient's odyssey with pemphigus vulgaris. They were all captivating and I learned a lot in each presentation. When the exhibits opened, I spoke with most of the reps and learned a lot about many new medications that will hopefully be in Australia soon. They were all thrilled to learn that I was from Australia and were equally eager to learn about the ways we treat the same conditions.

On Wednesday there were equally riveting discussions and presentations on alopecia, acne, women's health – which was particularly interesting and was presented by a lovely dermatologist/dermatopathologist who works at The Mayo clinic in this field. Also discussed was cutaneous lupus and then a presentation called skin is a canvas which compared skin to art and discussed how to look closer and ask more meaningful questions to get to the bottom on a diagnosis.

Unfortunately, in the United States access to medications, especially biologics, are dependent on if they have health insurance, what type they have and if it is even covered. A lot of nurses and reps have lengthy discussions on how to get patients covered or “preapproved” for these medications and it seems to be quite challenging. I also learned that nurse practitioners and doctors are able to prescribe these biologics, it doesn't have to be from a dermatologist. There are many

differences in each medical system across the world. This experience has made me feel confident that Australia has a great and competent medical system, although not without its own challenges, I consider myself privileged to have the access that I do.

I met many brilliant and passionate doctors and nurses from this experience, and I am so fortunate to have had this opportunity to experience such an informative conference in such a special place. When I wasn't at the conference you could find me getting my steps in taking in the historic district, eating BBQ, fried chicken, collard greens and peach cobbler, going on tours learning about the enslaved people, and I even went on a haunted ghost walking tour! I loved every minute in Savannah and would highly recommend visiting. Thank you to ADNA and the executive committee for giving me the privilege to attend this conference.

Taylor Spate

2022 ADNA USA/Canada travel award recipient