

## **Dr Keddie's report of the Richard Hughse Travel Bursary for attendance at the Peripheral Nerve Society Annual Meeting in Baltimore, USA.**

The PNS conference was held in Baltimore, Washington from the 21-25<sup>th</sup> of July at the Baltimore Renaissance Harbourside Hotel, situated in the heart of the famed inner harbour. The majority of the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery peripheral nerve team attended, with medical, nursing and physiotherapy representation, delivering talks and poster presentations.

The meeting provided a mixture of plenary lectures, oral platforms and poster sessions. Specialist interest groups ran in parallel sessions, for those interested in genetic, inflammatory and diabetic neuropathies. Highlights of the plenary lectures for me were from Michelle Mauerman on the treatment of paraproteinaemic neuropathies, new antibodies and mechanisms in immune mediated neuropathies by Claudia Sommer and the broad range of talks on POEMS syndrome. I was also fascinated by attending sessions gathering opinions and assistance setting up international collaborative studies in database building for CIDP and the IMAGiNe study for IgM paraproteinaemic neuropathy. In a field where patient populations are small, such studies are hugely important in being able to answer important research questions which would otherwise be unable to answer from single centre/ nation studies. I was fortunate enough to be asked to provide an oral presentation on the natural history of POEMS syndrome, detailing the clinical features, investigations, treatments and outcomes of the UK POEMS cohort, and compare/ contrast with other large cohorts from America, Japan and China. It was a fantastic opportunity for me to present to the world's leading POEMS experts from across the globe, in that I felt we were able to put our centre and the UK 'on the map' as the one of the major sites for POEMS research. This natural history study is the first stage of my PhD, and an important step before more wet laboratory research investigating the pathological mechanisms of the disease and the neuropathy it causes, which I hope to present at subsequent PNS meetings.

I also presented a poster detailing the clinico-pathological findings from patients with peripheral neurolymphomatosis presenting over the last 15 years to our centre. As such a rare presentation of a rare disease, this poster attracted interest from several peripheral nerve clinicians who have seen and treated patients of their own. From my own perspective, this was also a good opportunity to display my interests and network with others in the (very niche and unique!) field of paraproteinaemic neuropathy, haemato-neurology and neuroimmunology.

The conference was a great learning experience, a fantastic opportunity to meet experts in the field both from home and afar, and motivating to hopefully be able to stand up in a few years time and present the outcomes of my research fellowship!

Ending the meeting with Professor Richard Hughes collecting an award for his contribution towards research on peripheral neuropathies and the study of Guillain-Barre syndrome was a fitting celebration of a hugely inspiring neurologist's outstanding career's work.

Finally, thank you for supporting my attendance at this excellent meeting, which was enlightening both for my ongoing research and clinical practice.

Stephen Keddie