

Paul Allan ECR Bursary

This was my first time attending the European Congress of Radiology (ECR) in Vienna. As this was my final year as a trainee I set out at the start of the academic year to carry out an audit/research good enough to be accepted to ECR. In the end I had two posters accepted by the congress and was eager to attend. I am very grateful to the SRS and the Paul Allan ECR Bursary which provided financial support to allow me to attend.

The ECR is the flagship meeting of the ECR and it ran from the 28th February to the 4th of March. I left the bitter cold Glasgow just before "The Beast from the East" came to town, making it out on the last flight of the day. As it turns out whilst there was little snow in Vienna, it was much colder than Glasgow with temperatures throughout the week hitting -14oC.

ECR the conference

I was well prepared for the conference having downloaded the ECR App/diary and read through the plethora of options, marking out my timetable for the week. On the first day at the conference I was blown away by the size of the venue and the hordes of people streaming in. I had initially pencilled in lots of scientific sessions, however, after the first morning it became clear that the interactive sessions and educational talks on radiological emergencies were best suited for me and not to be missed! One of my particular favourites was an excellent and entertaining session on imaging in aortic dissection which was given by an enthusiastic and characteristically well dressed Italian radiologist. In addition to the scheduled talks there were 6 very challenging cases as part of the "case of the day" series which you could peruse at your leisure on one of the many provided computers. I became particularly puzzled by the Bouveret Syndrome question!

My favourite talk was on "imaging of the prostate" which led to a healthy discussion on use of contrast in prebiopsy MRI and the soon to be released update to PI- RADS. Other notable talks included "Diffuse liver imaging" and "Liver, lung and thyroid Ablation." Another highlight was a coffee morning discussion on getting the best out of radiology in undergraduate education. This highlighted various educational techniques including the "flipped classroom", something I plan to try and implement within our radiology trainee teaching in the west of Scotland.

As well as the conference area there was a large trade show which was always packed with equipment suppliers and the latest tech. I had a try on the latest in reporting chair technology which looked like something from "Total Recall" and a brief trial of some wireless portable ultrasound equipment.

Vienna the City

Have never been to Austria I was in awe of the architecture around the city with beautiful, towering gold gilded gothic buildings on every corner. Due to the demands of the conference I only really saw “Old Vienna” but it has now catapulted up my travel destination list for the future. Highlight included an very chilly evening Ice Skating through the park next to the city hall and an evening sampling the local cheese and wines. Due to the freezing temperatures one evening walk home was made perilous by a saunter across the frozen over Danube, although I knew I was safe when a group of ice hockey players whizzed past me! Lots of time was spent with consultants from the west of scotland from various sites, reminding me what a fantastically friendly community radiology is.

Poster Presentations

My attendance at the conference was under the Rising Stars award, received for my two poster submissions. The first was entitled “Has the expiratory radiograph passed its expiry date?” which looked at the use of expiratory radiographs in the GRI as part of pneumothorax diagnosis. The second poster, titled “Potential application of computer aided detection (CAD) and scoring of lung nodules in a Scottish lung cancer screening programme” evaluated the ability of a computer system to safely exclude lung cancer in a screening population. Whilst neither of these posters won an award I was proud of the work that went into producing them.

Key things I learnt

- People speak German in Austria, not Austrian!
- Prebiopsy MRI prostate is less accurate than I thought, but still significantly better than TRUS biopsy
- The flipped classroom approach to learning could lend itself very well to radiology
- The long term mortality outcomes for tumour ablation and surgery are significantly better than chemotherapy alone.