

## Pathology Update 2017 – Sydney, Australia

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I was awarded a full Medical Student Grant from the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) to attend Pathology Update 2017, which was held in the newly opened International Convention Centre in Sydney, Australia. The outstanding scientific programme covered recent developments in all disciplines of pathology including anatomical, chemical, forensic, genetic, hematological, immunopathological and microbiological, with over 140 local and international experts presenting their findings in plenary, oral communication, workshop and moderated poster sessions. A record breaking 1,450 delegates attended the 3-day conference, which included a Welcome Cocktail Party, Afternoon High Tea and the RCPA Annual Awards and Admission Ceremony where new Pathology Fellows were formally inducted into the College.

I found Pathology Update 2017 a truly worthwhile experience as it enabled me to be exposed and learn about many exciting areas of pathology that I previously had little knowledge or understanding. My personal highlight of the education programme were the inspiring lectures by Dr. Andrew Baker, chief medical examiner in Minneapolis who passionately presented on the attack on the Pentagon, the Minneapolis bridge collapse, fractures in infants and cognitive bias in medicine, allowing me an inside perspective into the role of a forensic pathologist and the often-under-appreciated amount of effort that occurs in mass disasters. Furthermore, I gained a new understanding of the importance of timely and accurate forensic reporting in cases of suspected child abuse, which may aid in the prevention of further incidents and bring justice to victims. I also found the fascinating lecture on new markers for pre-eclampsia in pregnancy by Professor Shaun Brennecke, director of the department of maternal-fetal medicine at the Royal Women's Hospital, to be incredibly motivating and interesting since pre-eclampsia is a common, serious pregnancy disorder that has a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of mothers and their babies. Prof. Brennecke discussed an exciting new study which has shown that the ratio of soluble Fms-like tyrosine kinase 1 (sFlt1) to placental growth factor (PlGF) in the blood of pregnant women with suspected pre-eclampsia has predictive value for the short-term absence of the disorder. (1) Although this may seem like a small step towards the development of early intervention in this condition, the results have important implications in changing the way we will diagnose pregnant woman at risk of pre-eclampsia in the future.

I strongly recommend any medical student to attend Pathology Update to broaden their understanding of this specialty, which underpins every aspect of medicine, from diagnostic testing and monitoring of chronic diseases to cutting-edge genetic research and blood transfusion technologies as well as being integral to the diagnosis of every cancer. After all *Medicine is Pathology*.

I would like to personally thank Professor Assam El-Osta for his continued support in my future research aspirations. Furthermore, my deep gratitude to my family for helping with the practical side of my travel, without which this trip would not have been possible.

### References:

1. Zeisler H, Llorba E, Chantraine F, Vatish M, Staff AC, Sennstrom M, et al. Predictive Value of the sFlt-1:PlGF Ratio in Women with Suspected Preeclampsia. *N Engl J Med*. 2016;374(1):13-22.