

The Joint BDIAP-ABP Symposium on Breast Pathology

22-23 November 2024- Bursary report

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the BDIAP for my bursary for this event. My name is Louise Greenhalgh and I am an Advanced Practitioner (Biomedical Scientist), at Path Links Pathology, Lincoln County Hospital. I am involved in all aspects of the histological dissection of breast, from benign and prophylactic specimens, through to malignant resections.

I was very enthusiastic to attend this meeting to increase my knowledge of aspects of breast pathology that I do not encounter in my day-to-day practice. It is often difficult to gain sufficient funding to attend these events, so I was extremely grateful to the BDIAP for this awarded bursary.

The entire event was well organised and many useful and interesting aspects of the discipline were covered. It was an opportunity to be in the presence of many eminent Breast Pathologists, who all continue to contribute to our evolving understanding of the disease processes involved. Some of the presentations were outside the scope of my current understanding, but the fact that the sessions are recorded, has given me the opportunity to revisit them and watch them at my own pace. They have provided a good foundation for further independent study and reflection.

Professor Ellis provided a historical look at the subject and his own involvement, including the development of the grading system. This was in sharp contrast to the presentations on developing technologies such as digital pathology, artificial intelligence and molecular testing. It was interesting to hear how the experts believe our future practices and procedures may change and evolve. Thanks to Professors Levenson, Boyd, Jones and Grigoriadis. I have some knowledge on Oncotype DX testing, so Professor Dowsett's presentation allowed consolidation of my learning and practical understanding.

The presentations and discussions from Professors Pinder and Pia Foschini, focussing on metaplastic carcinomas and rarer salivary gland-like breast lesions allowed me to gain knowledge of pathology types that a smaller non-training hospital laboratory rarely experience. This definitely provided me with a starting point for further study. As a department, embarking on bringing HER-2 testing in-house, the talk from Professor Shaaban on HER-2 low assessment was extremely useful. I was unaware of the HER-2 ultra-low group of patients. The discussion between the specialist pathologists was also very enlightening.

As a dissection Advanced Practitioner, it was great that we had a presentation from a surgeon on surgical margins for DCIS and invasive breast cancer. Mr Gandhi provided the clinician's point of view and highlighted the importance of the relationship between surgeon and pathologist in providing the best outcome for the patient. This has strengthened my understanding on the importance of margins and has improved my ability to understand MDT reports and subsequent treatment decisions for patients. This was also covered well by Dr Deb in his presentation on the measuring of tricky breast cancers and their margins. The two presentations worked well together and were most beneficial personally.

The Saturday morning case presentations with microscopic images were extremely interesting and useful. I have been able to reflect on all sessions for my personal CPD and my ongoing IBMS Dissection qualification portfolio. I thank all presenting pathologists, all experts I was able to meet and of course the BDIAP for the opportunity.