

BDIAP Bursary Report for the USCAP 114th Annual Meeting

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Why did you attend the USCAP 114th annual meeting?

The USCAP Annual Meeting is the largest and most prestigious gathering of pathologists worldwide. Attending this event in person has been a long-standing dream of mine. Now, at the conclusion of my training to become a pathologist, I felt this was the perfect moment to seize the opportunity. My goal was to deepen my understanding of groundbreaking research, learn directly from renowned experts, and immerse myself in topics related to bone and soft tissue pathology — my area of interest.

Moreover, this year's meeting was held in Boston, a city rich in history and culture, which made the experience even more special.

Do you feel more confident in your knowledge / understanding of pathology following attendance at the USCAP 114th annual meeting?

Absolutely! I gained valuable insights into potential diagnostic pitfalls in soft tissue and bone pathology. Beyond the lectures, I had the chance to meet and connect with many inspiring colleagues. I now know several experts from the Netherlands and abroad whom I would feel comfortable reaching out to in the future for discussion when I encounter challenging cases. This alone is incredibly reassuring as I transition into a pathologist.

Highlight aspects of pathology that you have learnt from the USCAP 114th annual meeting which you were not aware of prior to the event.

One of the highlights for me was presenting my research poster on DNA methylation profiling in atypical spindle cell/pleomorphic lipomatous tumors — a controversial entity. I had engaging discussions with many pathologists about whether this truly represents a distinct tumor type or simply lies on a spectrum with spindle cell lipomas. These conversations gave me a broader perspective and will undoubtedly enrich the manuscript I am currently writing.

I also appreciated the high level of engagement. Unlike smaller conferences, where poster sessions sometimes feel under-attended, USCAP was filled with curious and enthusiastic attendees. I felt incredibly

honored when experts like Dr. Steven Billings and Dr. Scott Kilpatrick took the time to visit my poster. Meeting them in person was a memorable experience — one I think of whenever I come across their papers or textbooks.

I attended the ticketed long course “Keeping it Real: Merging Traditional and Contemporary Practices in Musculoskeletal Pathology,” as well as the microscopy session “Case Illustration of Pitfalls in Diagnosing Bone and Soft Tissue Tumors.” These sessions were incredibly valuable. The microscopy session, in particular, presented cases that highlighted diagnostic traps — ones I might have fallen into myself — but thanks to this training, I now recognize them early in my career.

I also attended sessions hosted by the team behind *Modern Pathology*, which opened my eyes to the importance of choosing the right journals when submitting manuscripts. I had never fully realized the risks of predatory journals and how they exploit early-career researchers. This awareness will guide my future publication decisions.

Are there any aspects of what you have learnt during the USCAP 114th annual meeting that you would consider incorporating into your own practice?

One of the most impactful experiences was attending a mentoring lunch with Dr. Marisa Nucci, Professor of Pathology at Harvard Medical School. She shared invaluable advice on the transition from trainee to consultant, the importance of hard work, surrounding yourself with the right mentors, and staying humble and open to lifelong learning. Her words truly resonated with me, and I will carry those lessons with me throughout my career.

Did the USCAP 114th annual meeting meet your expectations?

It exceeded them. From the scale of the conference to the quality of the lectures, posters, and overall atmosphere, everything was top-notch. Boston itself was an amazing city to explore — full of history, charm, and great food spots.

Finally, would you recommend the USCAP 114th annual meeting to your colleagues?

Without hesitation. I’ve already encouraged my fellow trainees and colleagues to join BDIAP, so they too can benefit from the opportunity to attend USCAP and similar events. I wholeheartedly recommend USCAP not

just to trainees, but to all pathologists who wish to stay current with developments in the field, network with international peers, and gain exposure to how pathology is practiced around the world. I hope to return in the future — this time, as a practicing pathologist.

