

I am a senior nurse working within the Critical Care Outreach Team and the Adult Critical Care Unit in a large trauma centre in London. My strong passion and interest for intensive care medicine carried me throughout my career and studies. After a MSc in Critical Care, I am currently studying on the Advanced Clinical Practice pathway. During the end of the summer break between modules, I attended the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine in Berlin, Germany from 30th September to 2nd October, 2019. What a pleasure it was!

The congress is recognised internationally as a high-quality platform for doctors, nurses and allied health care practitioners. During these 3 fully packed days, expert professors and researchers discuss the evidences and experiences but also revise important physiological concept and management in clinical practice. You do not only attend presentations, but you can also attend interactive talks with the authors and revise your skills in practical workshops lead by experts. In my opinion, this was a valuable and unique possibility for my professional development. It was extremely fascinating to hear famous speakers and authors, but also networking with different colleagues and professionals from all over the world.

Some of the key topics included the application of ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) in ARDS (Acute respiratory Distress Syndrome) and cardiogenic shock and out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. The management of Sepsis was discussed including new research on immunotherapy and timing for early antibiotics (how early is too early or too late? Is the time of prescription equal to the time of administration?) and genomic phenotype of sepsis. The type of shock and use of Inotropic agents was revised passing through a nice revision of the physiological and side effects.

One of the challenges discussed included the recognition of deteriorating patients, the impact of delayed admission to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and the risks in inter-hospital transfer due to lack of capacity. It was interesting to hear the changes regarding end of life care practice and rehabilitation in ICU. There was a discussion about the role of artificial intelligence in preventing negative events and supporting clinical decision. I attended a workshop in scientific writing and mechanical ventilation and I could interact during talks regarding leadership and communication with relatives.

Authors highlighted the limitation of traditional Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) and statistical significance (e.g. $P < 0.05$). A particularly powerful and most thought-provoking presentation was given by Luciano Gattinoni, a man who does not need an introduction. He reiterated the importance to understand and study the physiological mechanism of our interventions rather than proving the efficacy in survival. It would be childish to presume that an intervention or therapy would have the same effect on individuals with different comorbidities, predisposition and DNA phenotypes. The general message was the need for an individualised approach and looking critically beyond big data.

At the end of the conference, authors presented the cutting-edge research recently published on JAMA (The Journal of the American Medical Association). Two RCT caught my interest: use of vitamin C in patients with sepsis and ARDS and Serlepressin in septic shock; but some points are unclear and lots of question still have to be answered.

I find the pathophysiological changes of human body during severe illness very fascinating and intensive care medicine is a constantly evolving science. Personally, I will continue to learn about critical care not only from ground-breaking research but also from the imperfection of practice, which is where theoretical knowledge are applied and modified to each individual.

This event was also an occasion to reflect on the need for intensive care medicine to become even more multidisciplinary. We cannot provide care without interconnection between different professions (nurse, doctors, physiotherapist, etc..); moreover, we could not survive the shift without teamworking.

I was lucky to attend this inspiring conference in the beautiful city of Berlin, which is full of history and stunning walks across the city and along the river.

I would like to thank the BACCN for their support and I am looking forward to the next opportunity.