

I recently attended the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) Annual Meeting in Phoenix, AZ. I presented my project titled “*S. aureus* Superantigens Found on AD (i.e. Atopic Dermatitis) Skin Alter Human Keratinocyte Biology” in a 10-minute oral presentation during the Best of Allergic Skin Disease 2022 Oral Abstract Session. This was my first in-person oral presentation at a large meeting, and it was really exciting to present my work and hear comments and questions from other researchers in the field. Two of the questions/comments were in relation to next-step experiments that I am already in the process of performing, and it was reassuring to know that I am moving in the right direction with my project. I’ll be presenting some of these findings at the Society for Investigative Dermatology Annual Meeting at the end of May.

During this meeting I was able to attend a lot of informative sessions that are relevant to my research, including talks from leaders in the field of AD such as Emma Guttman-Yassky, Mark Boguniewicz, Donald Leung, Tissa Hata, and of course my mentor Lisa Beck. These individuals are all part of the Atopic Dermatitis Research Network (ADRN), which our lab is part of. ADRN labs work together on clinical trials and other research projects. My research is partially supported by the ADRN, and it was exciting to get to meet many of these researchers, among others, who are part of this collaborative network.

While I have been attending virtual conferences over the past two years, it was wonderful to attend an in-person conference again. I was able to engage and network with a lot of great scientists (and many great female scientists!) over the course of the conference. There were a handful of individuals who I was able to chat with throughout the meeting. For example, there was one researcher-clinician and her post-doc who I spoke with at two poster-sessions, three symposia/talks, and socially throughout the conference. Being able to connect with these scientists could be really beneficial as I finish up my PhD work and consider applying to post-doc positions. On one of the days, I had lunch with the two other members of the Beck lab who attended the conference, Lisa, and one of her former mentors. Overall, I think the connections I made at this meeting will be really helpful when deciding on my plans for the future, and I am so grateful that I was able to attend this meeting with my mentor and that she could introduce me to these amazing researchers. Thank you to GWIS for supporting my travel to this great meeting!



Mary Moran, (third from left) with the other wonderful female scientists of the Beck Lab – Kimmy Leffler, Lisa Beck, and Jess Forman.