

AWARDEE REPORT FORM



NAME	Anandita Mariappan
TWITTER HANDLE* <i>optional</i>	
UNIVERSITY	University of Galway, Ireland
NAME OF AWARD	Barclay-Smith Travelling Fund
PURPOSE OF AWARD <i>conference/event attended/organised (full name) with city and dates.</i>	
The award provided me with the opportunity to present my research poster at the Anatomical Society Summer Meeting, held at the University of Bristol from 14th –17th July 2026. I conducted my research on the “<i>Impact of Rac1 Loss on Epidermal Proliferation and Collagen Remodeling in Mice Keratinocytes Following Inflammation</i>” during the summer of 2025 and I was fortunate to receive the financial aid of the Undergraduate Student Summer Vacation Research Scholarship Award.	
REPORT: What were your anticipated benefits? <i>Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.</i>	
To begin with, I anticipated the conference would provide me with a platform and tools to further develop my research communication skills. Being able to present my research to an audience of researchers, practitioners and PhD fellowship holders would help me become more confident in articulating my research findings. Through presenting as well as receiving invaluable constructive feedback, I expected the conference to enhance my current skill set for me to continue to grow and develop as a researcher. Being a medical student, I was particularly interested in the conference theme of the musculoskeletal system as I anticipated gaining insight into current research being conducted within the field, which could be translatable into Medicine. I was keen on attending the invited lectures, especially Ms Barrett’s talk on Parkinson’s disease, as it would broaden my understanding of the topic beyond my current curriculum. In addition to these benefits, I was looking forward to networking with individuals who are actively involved in research and getting to know more about their field of expertise.	

Overall, I felt honoured to have the opportunity to attend the Anatomical Society Summer Conference as well as being able to present my own research.

COMMENTS: Describe your experience at the conference / lab visit / course / seminar/ event.

Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.

My experience at the conference was rewarding and thoroughly exceeded my expectations. I found it truly inspiring to listen to the invited speakers on their chosen area of research as it not only introduced me to advanced methodologies it also sparked my interest in novel research areas. All of their presentations highlighted how vast the research field is, as well as the sheer complexity of innovation involved in designing and conducting high-quality research.

One of the most memorable talks was given by Dr. Holsgrove on 'Population-based spine testing using a six-axis bioreactor'. I found his talk on how he mirrored the intricate movements of our spine daily using the six-axis bioreactor particularly fascinating. Whilst listening to his presentation, I started thinking of endless applications of his research to medicine, ranging from potential therapies for spinal injuries, including common conditions such as slipped discs, to aiding in regenerative medicine.

Further to the talks, I explored the exhibition stands featuring a variety of organisations showcasing their technologies and resources. One of which stood out was the Anatomage booth and after learning about their digital platform containing 3D cadaver images, I found myself wondering how many medical students could benefit from using this platform to support their learning. Additionally, walking through the room to view the range of posters and being able to engage in discussions, allowed me to learn more about various areas of research.

REPORT: In relation to skills, what were the most important things you gained? *(does not apply to equipment grant.* For public engagement/outreach awards what did your audience gain and how did you evaluate success?

Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.

Considering this was one of my first experiences presenting to an academic audience like this, the conference provided me with a platform to develop the skill of communicating my research findings eloquently and successfully. Throughout the poster session, I gained confidence in answering questions about my research as well as learning about areas of improvement in my methodology. Moreover, speaking to others allowed me to dive deeper into the applicability of my findings in the field of medicine, including how Rac1's role could be further studied and applied to potential therapeutic targets for inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema.

In addition to this, I gained a vast depth of knowledge in other research areas whilst discussing with others. A topic of particular interest was the influence of AI-curated images in anatomical learning, as well as learning about the usage of DT-MRI to create a digital library of the heart. Exposure to research topics through the invited speakers as well as poster presentations allowed me to appreciate how research

developments could potentially benefit both patients and fellow medical students in the future. One standout poster presentation that caught my interest was conducted on ALS mice, aiming to investigate their neurological networks. I found this interesting to read through, as neurology is an area I am currently studying at university and aim to research in the future. Further to this, being able to observe the experimental mouse model used in the study allowed me to draw comparisons with my own research model and appreciate the different research approaches.

REPORT: How do you think you will put this learning experience into practice in the future? For public engagement/outreach awards how with the materials/knowledge generated by this activity be used in the future?

Minimum number of words between 200-400. Please write in coherent paragraphs.

Attending the Anatomical Society Conference this summer has allowed me to refine my skill set and gain confidence in presenting my research as well as answering questions, which will be transferable to my professional career. I am also grateful for the opportunity to observe and listen to others about their experimental models, methodologies and research interests, as this encouraged me to consider additional fields of research I may want to delve into. Meeting a multitude of people and having the opportunity to discuss their work showcased the importance of engaging with the wider research community, and I hope to carry this experience forward by seeking research opportunities amongst fellow colleagues. Being able to partake in the conference has encouraged me to actively involve myself in research along with my medical studies to develop my own academic achievements.

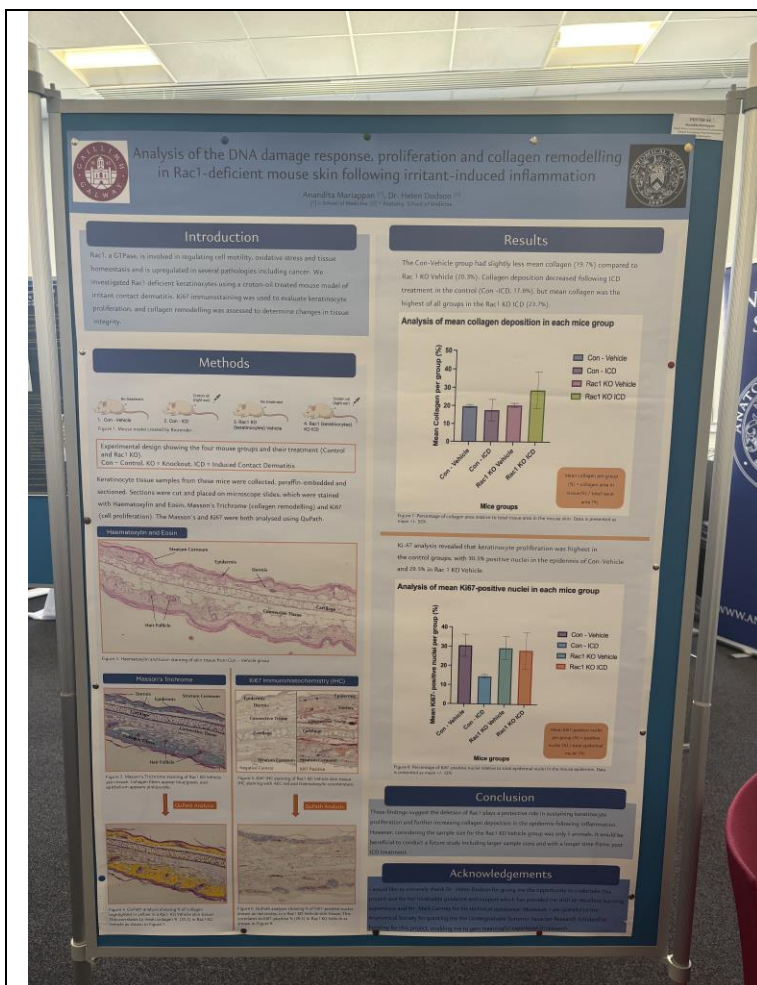
To conclude, I am grateful for the opportunity provided by the Anatomical Society to attend the conference, as well as for receiving the support of the Barclay-Smith Fund. This has allowed me not only to attend the conference and present my poster, but also to experience Bristol and engage with the research community. The skills gained from this experience have allowed for my academic development and increased my confidence to engage with research in the future.

Data Protection/GDPR: I consent to the data included in this submission being collected, processed and stored by the Anatomical Society. **Answer YES or NO in the Box below**

Yes

Graphical Images: If you include graphical images you must obtain consent from people appearing in any photos and confirm that you have consent. A consent statement from you must accompany each report if relevant. A short narrative should accompany the image. **Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below**

YES



Picture showcasing my poster presentation stand at the Anatomical Society Summer Meeting in Bristol 2026

Copyright: If you submit images you must either own the copyright to the image or have gained the explicit permission of the copyright holder for the image to be submitted as part of the report for upload to the Society's website, Newsletter, social media and so forth. A copyright statement must accompany each report if relevant. **Answer N/A not applicable, YES or NO in the box below**

N/A

SIGNATURE

Anandita Mariappan

DATE

27/07/26

If submitted electronically, a type-written name is acceptable in place of a hand-written signature

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