✸ Reflecting on an Inspiring BSI 2025 Congress ✸

I had the pleasure of attending the British Society for Immunology (BSI) 2025 Congress in Liverpool, and it was an incredible experience. The event brought together leading voices in immunology, and I left feeling energised by the innovative research, insightful sessions, and meaningful conversations.

A highlight for me was presenting my poster describing our latest data on immune responses in podoconiosis, which sparked valuable discussions and constructive feedback from colleagues across the field. Sharing my work and connecting with others exploring similar questions was both rewarding and inspiring, and it underscored the importance of collaborative research in advancing the field.

I particularly enjoyed the infection-focused sessions, which provided cutting-edge insights into host-pathogen interactions. The plenary session "**Challenging humans: infections, vaccines and allergens**" highlighted advances in human challenge studies, vaccine development, and allergen immunity — showing how human immunology research is evolving to tackle complex infectious challenges. Another standout was "Barrier, bugs and breakdowns", exploring how barrier tissues such as the skin, gut, and lungs sense pathogens, coordinate immune responses, and maintain tissue integrity. This session was critical for me, connecting directly to how environmental triggers, like soil exposure, shape immune responses in podoconiosis.

Parallel sessions also offered rich learning opportunities. **"Innate sensing at barrier sites"** and **"The ins and outs of mucosal immunology"** explored how innate and adaptive immune cells protect barrier tissues, regulate inflammation, and interact with the microbiota. Additionally, "Immune interactions in tissues" highlighted tissue-resident T cells and their roles in barrier immunity, infection control, cancer, and tolerance, deepening my understanding of how local responses influence systemic immunity.

I am extremely grateful to the National Institute for Health and Care Research (**NIHR**) (grant #NIHR 131996), Brighton and Sussex Medical School (**BSMS)**, and the **BSI team** for funding my travel, which enabled me to engage fully with the congress, present my research, and network with leading immunologists. Attending BSI 2025 has enriched my understanding of infectious disease immunology and barrier immunity, and I look forward to applying these insights to my future work.

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