



EHR2023 meeting in Sheffield (written by Dr Claire Higgins)

We have just finished our annual meeting, which was held in the quintessentially English city of Sheffield from 14-16th June 2023. We (the organizing committee) had our first planning meeting in 2018 as the meeting was originally scheduled for 2020. A global pandemic and 3 years later, here we are having just hosted the first EHR2023 annual meeting in the post covid era. In the first iteration (back in 2020) we had a complex programme with concurrent sessions, however when we were given the opportunity to redesign everything we decided to go back to basics and create a programme that reflected the original ethos and goals of the EHR2023 – to bring together clinicians and basic scientists with an interest in hair disease and hair research. We had 1 main room where all talks were held and spent a long time in planning meetings ensuring the programme was balanced. To achieve this each session had only two invited speakers – normally one clinical researcher and one basic researcher, and the remaining talks were selected from the abstracts. In total there were 49 talks with >50% selected from the abstracts and approximately half clinical research and half basic science research. We had >250 delegates in attendance from 26 countries – this diversity and breadth was also represented in the 69 posters on display. We also had a significant patient presence and involvement in the meeting, and were pleased to host Alopecia UK as an exhibitor and their CEO Sue Schilling as a presenter at our opening ceremony. The attendees were all given opportunities to meet with them and the other exhibitors/delegates at the 4 coffee breaks and 3 poster sessions. While the presentations were thought-provoking and generated a lot of excitement and discussion, another highlight of the meeting were the two social events. First, our Welcome Reception was held in the Winter Gardens where we were welcomed by the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Cllr Colin Ross. The brass band and magicians walking around brought a touch of magic to the evening and kept us entertained while we sipped prosecco amongst the >2500 species of plants.

On the second evening, we had our Gala Dinner in the breathtaking Sheffield Cathedral. Still a functioning cathedral, the oldest parts of the building date back to c.1200. We were entertained by our talented colleagues – first Professors Vicky Jolliffe and Richard Logan played the violin and accordion as we had welcome drinks, then the talented Dr Ahmed Kazmi was our emcee for the night.

Renditions of songs in Greek, French and English with jokes sprinkled in between kept everyone laughing and in high spirits. For the meal we were treated to roast beef and yorkshire pudding, which is a local delicacy.



From Left to Right: Dr David Ansell, Prof Julie Thornton, Cllr Colin Ross, Dr Gill Westgate at the Winter Gardens Welcome Reception.



Impressive general view of the Gala Dinner at Sheffield Cathedral

At the time of writing this it has been less than a week since the close of the meeting but still the early feedback is very positive. Delegates loved the varied nature of the programme...the balance...and many new collaborations were born. When we set out on this journey in 2018 I didn't really appreciate the wonder of the EHR2023, but on reflection it is a meeting like no other. Unlike clinical meetings, basic science meetings or patient focused meetings, the EHR2023 meeting brings these different worlds together. I am honoured, as a basic science researcher, to have been able to Chair this wonderful conference.



The EHRS 2023 Organising committee all dressed up for the Gala Dinner. From Left to Right: Dr Matt Harries, Dr Talveen Purba, Dr Sharon Wong, Dr Kerry Montgomery, Prof Andrew Messenger (President), Dr Gill Westgate (Secretary), Dr Gabriela Daniels, Dr Claire Higgins (Chair), Dr Bessam Farjo, Mrs Messenger (Prof Messengers wife), Mrs Victoria Leonard (EMD Direct)



From Left to Right at the Gala Dinner: Dr. Alba Gómez, Dr. Victor Cabezas, Dr. David Saceda-Corralo, Dr. Gill Westgate, Dr. Claire Higgins, Dr. Sergio Vano-Galvan, Dr. Patricia Burgos, Dr. Ángela Hermosa, Dr. Daniel Ortega, Dr. Jose Mir.

[EHRS 2023 – John Ebling Lecture](#)

Professor Ramon Grimalt from Spain was honored to receive the esteemed John Ebling Award, a prestigious recognition bestowed by the EHRS upon exceptional clinicians and scientists in the field of hair research. During his captivating John Ebling lecture, Professor Grimalt delivered an engaging presentation that drew intriguing parallels between diagnosing hair diseases and avian diagnosis, his newfound hobby. In this enlightening talk, he underscored the significance of observing the overall impression or appearance when arriving at a diagnosis, be it related to a skin or hair condition or pertaining to avian specimens.



Dr. Claire Higgins introducing Dr. Ramon Grimalt as the speaker for the John Ebling Lecture.



Prof. Ramon Grimalt receiving the commemorative plaque for his John Ebling lecture.
From Left to Right: Dr. Claire Higgins, Prof. Ramon Grimalt, Prof. Francis Ebling (John Ebling's son) and Prof. Val Randall.



EHRS 2023 – Keynote Lectures

Professor Ncoza Dlova, Head of Dermatology at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, presented the clinical science keynote lecture dedicated to unique hair disorders prevalent among South African individuals of African descent. She shed light on the profound importance of hair styling within this population and highlighted the potential adverse effects associated with certain styling practices, which can lead to scarring alopecia. In her discourse, Professor Dlova provided examples of special educational programs designed to empower South African women of African descent, encouraging them to adopt hair styling techniques that promote hair health and minimize harm.



Prof. Ncoza Dlova delivering the Clinical Science Keynote Lecture.



Dr. Mirna Perez-Moreno delivering the Basic Science Keynote Lecture.

The basic science keynote lecture was delivered by **Dr Mirna Perez-Moreno**, an Associate Professor in Cell Biology and Physiology in the Department of Biology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Professor Perez-Moreno delved into the intricate interplay between lymphatic vessels and the hair follicle stem cell niche, elucidating how this intricate interaction contributes to both skin and hair regeneration, unveiling the complexity of these processes. Her beautiful images presented during her talk highlight the expanse of the lymphatic system, while the elegant experimental models used unveil the complexity of the interaction of the lymphatic vessels with the hair follicle.

EHRS 2023 Prizes

During the congress, 26 oral communications and 69 posters were selected from the abstracts for presentation. The scientific committee awarded the following prizes:

Jurgen Schweizer Prize for the best basic science oral presentation

T11: Summik Limbu, UK

Miniaturisation of hair follicles in androgenetic alopecia may be driven by accelerated localised ageing

Best clinical - Oral

T2: Buket Basmanav, Germany

Clinical and etiological basis of comorbidities and therapy response in alopecia areata

Best basic science poster

P46: Leah Redmond, UK



Transcriptomics to uncover the role of the dermal papilla in human hair fibre pigmentation

Runner up – basic science poster

P49: Ana Rita Castro, Portugal

Unveiling the trichogenic signature of the human native dermal papilla

Best poster – clinical research

P24: Sang-Min Choi, Korea

Efficacy of oral retinoids as a maintenance therapy in cicatricial alopecia: a retrospective study

Runner up poster – clinical research

P25: Zoe Passam, UK

Minoxidil-induced trichostasis spinulosa of vellus hair?

Alopecia UK prize - poster most likely to impact patients

P28: Matthew Wynne, UK

Vibration assisted analgesia during intralesional corticosteroid therapy for alopecia

Travel awards were also awarded to several young investigators.



Recipients of Travel Grants to attend the EHRS2023

[Hair Exhibition in Sheffield \(written by Dr. Yuval Ramot\).](#)

By a remarkable coincidence, our EHRS hair meeting in Sheffield coincided with an extraordinary exhibition at the Weston Park Museum, also in Sheffield, focusing on the topic of hair. Titled "Hair: Untold Stories," this exhibition was conveniently located just a 10-minute walk from the congress venue and offered free admission.

While most of us, being hair enthusiasts, don't need a reminder of the importance of hair to people, the exhibition still served as a gentle reminder of the profound significance of hair in both cultural and everyday contexts.

The exhibition hall was separated into 3 sections, with the first section capturing my greatest interest. Traditionally, we perceive hair solely as a component of the human body, functioning as a covering for the scalp and face. However, this section of the exhibition showcased how hair can be utilized as a versatile material. Intriguing examples included a dress and shoes crafted from blonde hair, as well as exquisite jewellery and durable ropes made



from human hair. Interestingly, due to its extensive surface area, hair can even be employed in the absorption of oil spills.

The second section is a dedicated exploration of hair care, showcasing an array of astonishing hair styles. Within this section, a series of captivating portraits features hairdressers from Sheffield, each with their own unique and heartwarming stories. Among them, there are tales of hairdressers who have created special spaces for individuals on the autistic spectrum or established services offering support to those with mental health challenges. Reading their stories and witnessing how hair can serve as a means of aiding those in need was truly touching.

Moving on to the third section, the focus shifts towards the role of hair in diverse cultures and societies. This captivating display includes remarkable objects crafted from hair, integrated into ceremonial attire and hair jewellery spanning from Norway to Naga land in Northern India. I found this section particularly captivating as it highlighted the immense importance of hair in nearly every culture across the globe, emphasizing its universal significance.

Attending the exhibition after the conclusion of the meeting proved to be a brilliant decision, as it provided a tangible reflection of the scientific discussions that had taken place. Notably, a significant portion of the exhibition centred around the profound impact of hair styling in Afro-Caribbean culture, featuring a mesmerizing artwork by Kedisha Coakley, a talented artist based in Sheffield. This section served as a poignant reminder of the exceptional keynote address delivered by Professor Ncoza Dlova from South Africa, underscoring the significance of hair styling in Africa and the potential hair conditions associated with it.

Furthermore, the exhibition showcased heartwarming stories of hairdressers diligently fitting wigs for cancer patients and children undergoing chemotherapy, drawing a connection to the efforts made by scientists to prevent hair loss during chemotherapy treatments. This resonated with the enlightening conference talk by Professor Nikolas Georgopoulos from the UK, which explored scalp cooling interventions. Additionally, an informative poster was displayed, providing guidance on treating trichotillomania through habit reversal therapy.

Visiting the exhibition offered me the perfect conclusion to an outstanding hair meeting, establishing a vital connection between our scientific endeavours and the individuals for whom our work is dedicated. It reinforced the fundamental importance of our efforts, underscoring our commitment to the well-being of those we hope to provide cure.



Image from the Hair Exhibition.