

Student report

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I attended the 12th National Rural Health Conference in Adelaide on April 7.

The conference for me had three main goals: to meet other people interested in rural health, to present my research on barriers to rural orthopaedic treatment, and to make contacts to help my future training and job practice.

It turned out to be a whole lot more than that. On the first morning I saw my old medical school friend James Fitzpatrick present a great introduction and highlight the problems, issues and also the enthusiasm around rural health amongst the people present. It was a very inspirational opening.

The second part that blew me away was the talk by Tom Calma; this debunked lots of myth and stigmata around Aboriginal medical issues, and highlighted the ones for me that were most crucial and debilitating to his people. The talk will stay with me for a long time. Smoking is such a big issue with health, but even more so for me in Orthopaedics with many traumatic injuries and the relationship between poor bone healing, osteoporosis, bone infection and postoperative complications. Smoking is a huge issue not just socially, orthopaedics or for general health reasons.

The panel discussion was also very useful and had some very important speakers from industry, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and political groups. It gave great insight to the steps being taken to address the big issues, as well as video conferencing, and unifying care across different state and territory boundaries.

Finally I got to my presentation and showed lots of broken bones, I was nervous but it went well. I wish it had been in the large auditorium because I thought my findings were very topical with medical treatment in remote areas, and Orthopaedic injuries have great visual pictures and treatment pathways. That may have to be a future talk.

The day finished with a fine dinner and I was very honoured to see the live performance from Redgum. That will also stay in the memory for a long time.

Overall I feel very lucky to have the support of the RAMUS conference program and this will help me in my further work, training and education.

