

DDW New Orleans, May 2010

Before the DDW this year, all I knew about New Orleans was that it was the birthplace of jazz and that it was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. I decided to attend the DDW as I thought it would be an opportunity to widen my gastroenterology knowledge.

Built on the banks of the Mississippi River, this city possesses an abundance of unique architectural styles which reflect the city's historical roots and multicultural heritage. People are friendly and one can easily see why this city is home to numerous celebrations of which the 'Mardi Gras' is certainly the most famous.

The 2010 AGA Spring Postgraduate Course: Managing Digestive Diseases in the Next decade was the main reason for my attendance. The course addressed what to expect in the ever-developing field of digestive diseases, with focus on diagnosis and treatment, and practical information on the management of challenging cases. During clinical breakout sessions, difficult and thought provoking cases were presented and the audience had the opportunity to volunteer

management options and ask questions. Important topics such as difficulties in managing IBD, obesity and new imaging modalities were discussed.

The congress was a success and more than 13,000 GI health professionals attended to learn about the latest advances in the field. I attended a luncheon for 'Women in Gastroenterology' hosted by the AGA with an introduction by Gail Hecht and although I was the only foreigner there, it was insightful and inspirational to meet with some ambitious women in different areas of gastroenterology, who have been able to achieve success both in their professional and personal lives.

I would like to thank AstraZeneca for their gracious sponsorship in making this experience possible for me. This was the first time I attended the DDW and visited the US and both left me awestruck and inspired. I also learnt that a hurricane in New Orleans doesn't necessarily refer to devastation, but is also the name of a popular alcoholic drink...

