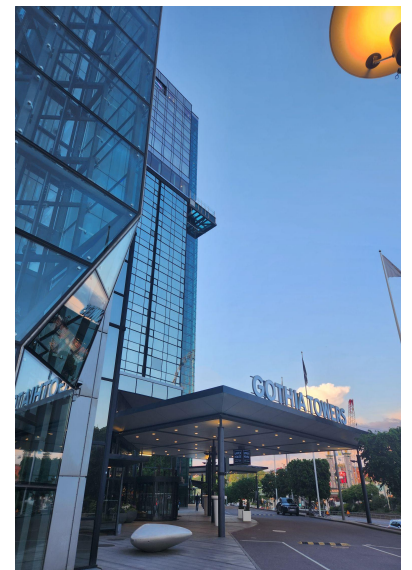


MIE 2023: Gothenburg, Sweden

James Roberts



As I looked out of the window of the plane at the sparkling ocean and the tiny, sparsely populated, green islands off the coast of Sweden, I reflected on the events that had led to this point. My first introductions to the PHCSG had been when I met Roz and John at a Faculty of Clinical Informatics event in London. I had been immediately struck by their enthusiasm for the field of technology and informatics as well as engaging and supporting people, such as myself, who are in the early stages of my career in this field. They told me about the Julian Costello travel bursary which supports people in the early stages of their informatics career to attend the annual MIE conference. This seemed like a fantastic opportunity to explore and expand my interest, learn new things and meet people working in the field as well as visit places I have never been before. It was very exciting to hear I had been accepted and I could make the dates work with my clinical work as a GP. I was off to Gothenburg!



I arrived in Gothenburg the day before the conference started which gave me some time to familiarise myself with the city and see some of the sights. My bus from the airport dropped me at the impressive Gothia Towers, the location of the conference. The views from the top are fantastic, looking out over the whole city and the rollercoasters of the amusement park next to it.

I enjoyed taking some time exploring the parks and city followed by an evening run to the lookout point, a fort at the top of a climb. This was exhausting but definitely worth it.

The first day of the conference I attended a workshop on openEHR. I got talking to another attendee from the UK, a doctor called Michael. It was only after 30 minutes of chatting that we made the realisation we were both there with the PHCSG as part of the Julian Costello Bursary. Out of the thousands of attendees it was such a happy coincidence that we made this connection just by chance and also that we shared a lot of similar interests. We both looked forward to the days ahead.

The opening ceremony set the scene for the conference. The safe use of technology, enabling collaboration and sharing of data within healthcare, as well as preparing healthcare workers and leaders for the rapid changes and developments in technology. Following this I met other members of the PHCSG and BCS, Vije, Jack, Mette and Philip. It was great hearing about the stories and paths that had led them to being here at MIE 2023. We enjoyed dinner at a restaurant high up in the tower enjoying the sunset over Gothenburg.



The conference was one of the largest I have ever been to. It was linked with Vitalis which brought some of the commercial and industry aspects alongside the healthcare and research based talks and workshops. The programme was extensive and I spent a lot of time darting from room to room picking the presentations that interested me most. Some of my highlights were; **AI in Healthcare: How can it help?** in which the speaker put forward the question 'Is it ethical NOT to draw on all our knowledge to provide medical care?' This was followed by a great talk on **Ethical AI** that explored considerations around data sourcing, its representation, how data is labelled and what we regard as the 'ground truth'. The speaker highlighted that if you only analyse part of the data then you only optimise a part of the system.

Between talks it was great to wander around the conference hall. There were stalls from Microsoft and Garmin though to small startups who were all keen to show off their latest technologies. You could try virtual reality headsets, hologram technologies, patient monitoring devices and more apps than you can imagine...oh and plenty of free coffee which seemed to switch to beer in the evening!



The conference also had a matchmaking event. I was quite surprised to get a number of meeting requests from various companies and professionals all the way up to the Swedish health leaders. These conversations really broadened my awareness of healthcare in other countries. The people I met were keen to share challenges and ways we are overcoming them.

A special mention should be made for our PHCSG members, Jack, Mette and Vije who led a workshop to discuss their work on their all-context shared decision support tool. The key message I took away is that we should consider ways in which we can use technology to better represent a patient's values. This can help provide more holistic and individualised care when supporting patients in making healthcare decisions.



On the last afternoon, Michael and I took the ferry to a small Island off the coast called Styrso. We walked the trails enjoying the amazing scenery and nature followed by a swim in the sea (surprisingly not as chilly as I expected!). On the boat ride back it was great to share our key take home messages and most enjoyable experiences from the last few days.

MIE 2023 was a whirlwind of information, ideas and excitement and has really given me a platform and renewed enthusiasm for pursuing my interest in digital technology in healthcare. I am very grateful to the PHCSG for selecting me and would really encourage anyone considering applying for the Julian Costello Bursary to do it. I had doubts about whether I was a suitable candidate and it is always easy to be put off by the logistical challenges of international travel however I am really glad that I did. One of the most important lessons for me from this experience has been that reaching out and saying yes can lead to new experiences that are exciting and of great benefit to my personal growth and development.

