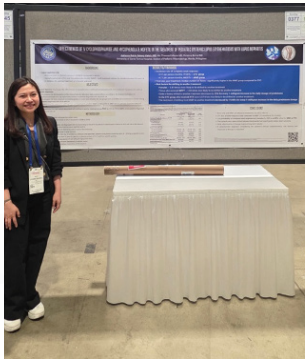


My First ACR Convergence Experience

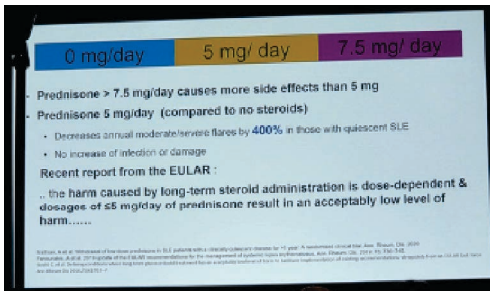
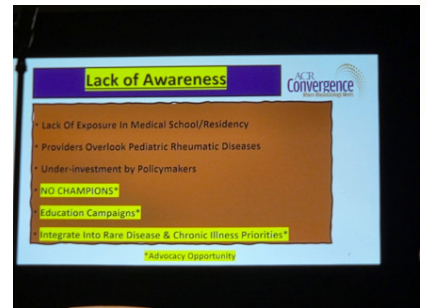
By Adrienne Katrin Guiang-Valerio and Ma. Theresa M. Collante

Attending my first ACR Convergence was a truly memorable and enriching experience. The scale of the event was initially overwhelming, but once I found my way around, it became a rewarding journey of learning and connection. Many of the sessions delved into molecular and translational aspects of rheumatology—concepts that may be challenging to apply directly in our local healthcare setting, yet offered valuable insights into future directions for the field.



I was honored to present my research poster entitled “Effectiveness of IV Cyclophosphamide and Mycophenolate Mofetil in the Treatment of Pediatric Systemic Lupus Erythematosus with Lupus Nephritis.” Having also attended EULAR, APLAR, and the Lupus Congress, I found ACR Convergence to be the most interactive in terms of poster engagement. It was humbling to exchange ideas with colleagues from around the world, many of whom were intrigued that we still utilize cyclophosphamide for lupus nephritis. Sharing insights from our context was both fulfilling and inspiring.

A particular session resonated with me discussed the lack of awareness of pediatric rheumatology—a challenge that closely mirrors our situation in the Philippines. It reminded me of the importance of advocacy, education, and collaboration to improve recognition and care for pediatric rheumatic diseases.



Another session that stood out was a debate on the role of corticosteroids in the management of pediatric systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Both perspectives presented compelling arguments, emphasizing that optimal patient care often lies in balancing scientific evidence with clinical judgment, experience, and precision. The debate highlighted how art and science intertwine in our daily clinical decisions, particularly in caring for children with complex rheumatic conditions.

A particularly meaningful moment was attending the presentation of Dr. Navarra, whose work and presence at this global platform were truly inspiring. Seeing a fellow Filipino rheumatologist share her research with such depth and clarity filled me with pride and renewed motivation to contribute to the field in my own ways.



Overall, my participation in ACR Convergence reinforced the importance of lifelong learning and reflection amidst rapid scientific progress. It was both inspiring and humbling to be part of a global community of clinicians and researchers united by the shared goal of improving the lives of patients with rheumatic diseases. I left the meeting with renewed motivation—to continue learning, to advocate for pediatric rheumatology in the Philippines, and to contribute, even in small ways, to advancing the care of children with rheumatic diseases.