I attended the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology’s District IV annual clinical meeting in Asheville, North Carolina recently. I attended because I was presenting a poster of my research done regarding compliance with the quadrivalent HPV vaccine. The meeting was very similar to meetings I have attended in the past such as the ACOG national annual clinical meeting in Chicago and the RCOG (Royal College) meeting in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

The first day I checked into the hotel but by the time I got to the hotel it was very dark outside. The roads to the hotel were very curvy and hilly indicative of the mountainous region. On Saturday I woke up early and went to the top floor of the hotel to register. I hung up my poster and stood by it to answer any questions. Most people asked me to summarize my study in a few sentences for them to save them from reading it. No one had any questions about the study but they did find that it was very interesting and are excited to see the study expand.

The conference was very small compared to previous conferences I have attended. Only about 8 posters were presented. Most of them were regarding the HPV vaccine in one way or another. One was over patient perception of the vaccine and I found it particularly interesting. Most patients perceived the vaccine could cause cervical cancer and was not very effective. Some believed that the vaccine could protect against
pregnancy and HIV as well. It really made me realize how much more time and effort I need to spend counseling my patients regarding medications and their conditions.

I attended a handful of the lectures offered and found one in particular most useful. It was entitled *The postpartum visit: Are we making the most of it?* The speaker talked about how there are very few times where patients are as responsive to a physician’s encouragement to make lifestyle changes as in the postpartum period. Diet, exercise, health maintenance, screening for diseases, tobacco cessation and drug or alcohol abuse are topics that the speaker, Dr. Menard, encouraged us to spend more time counseling patients about. The birth of a child, especially the first one can often make a patient more self-aware of their self-harming habits and facilitate necessary change and it is important as physicians that we help encourage that at every visit but especially the postpartum follow up visit.

Another lecture that I found interesting was a presentation regarding incidence of metabolic syndrome at follow up in women with gestational diabetes. These women are falling through the health system cracks as well. They tend to have exceptional care while pregnant but after delivery can have persistent health problems that are often overlooked or missed entirely. We as physicians need to understand that when a woman develops a problem in pregnancy such as diabetes or hypertension that it could be an early warning sign that the patient will develop these problems later in life. These patients should not be overlooked and screened early and often for those diseases.

After presenting my poster and attending a few lectures regarding current practices I had some time to explore the area. I visited the nearby smokey mountain national park. It was a beautiful time of year to visit. The mountains were covered with
trees in every fall color. Lots of wildlife was actively roaming about. I saw elk, deer, turkeys, woodchucks, and ALMOST saw a bear. I climbed a mountain and at the top it was snowing so much that it was accumulating on the ground and the trees had ice sickles on them. Although this conference was not the most educational conference I have attended I certainly learned things at it. I would strongly recommend all students to attend at least one conference as a student because any knowledge we gain now will help us down the road into residency and beyond.