Report on 20th Biennial National Atomic Spectroscopy Symposium 2022

The BNASS 2022 symposium was held in the month of June. It was a 2-day (28th-29th June 2022) conference. The conference was organised for analytical early career researchers. I was lucky enough to be part of BNAS as my abstract was accepted for the symposium. The symposium was held in the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. The arrangements were more than perfect. It was my first conference after COVID 19.

The program was very well organised, with relevant keynote speakers and presenters. I had a chance to socialise and network with people from diverse background. I was also one of the presenters at the conference. I received useful feedback, which is reflected in my work. As I am in my final year, I also was also hunting for a "potential viva examiners", I was also lucky enough to meet couple of researchers from my field. It was also pleasant to see many international PhD candidates participating in the conference.

One of the highlight of the conference was the stalls of all the companies and meeting their marketing/ technical teams. I had a chance to meet people from various companies and discussed about their products in length.

I was also award bursary for my travel and stay for two nights. The service and communication of the BNASS team was exemplary. I am looking forward to attending similar conferences and symposium in future as well.

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20th Biennial National Atomic Spectroscopy Symposium, June 2022 – Manchester

I would like to thank the Royal Society of Chemistry's Atomic Spectroscopy Group for kindly awarding me the travel grant for the 20th Biennial National Atomic Spectroscopy Symposium (BNASS). I am currently a third-year doctoral student, and my research is focused on understanding the origins of and physiological mechanisms for the high cadmium (Cd) concentrations reported in cacao beans (*Theobroma cacao* L.) grown in South and Central America. Without this generous grant, I would not have been able to attend the symposium and provide a presentation on my doctoral research findings.

My presentation was focused on whether zinc (Zn) and Cd, both having very similar chemical and physical properties, were expected to undergo similar biological and physicochemical processing by cacao plants during uptake, storage, and translocation to aerial plant parts. If Zn and Cd use similar mechanisms to enter and move around plants, agricultural and land management practices such as Zn supplementation added to nutrient growth mediums (e.g., soils) can be implemented to reduce the uptake and translocation of Cd in cacao plants. My research involved methods such as using anion exchange chromatography and multiple collector ICP-MS to measure Zn stable isotopes and concentrations of juvenile seedlings from 19 genetically diverse genotypes of cacao.

Through this experience, I was able to meet leading researchers in atomic spectroscopy within the field of analytical chemistry. Through the research presentations and keynote speeches, I learned greatly about novel applications of atomic spectroscopy to biological and clinic samples outside of my specialisation, which I would not have learned about otherwise. BNASS also gave me an opportunity to meet other scientists as well as share ideas and knowledge with my peers on frontier science and research. Thank you for the opportunity and fantastic experience!

Elnaz Barati, PhD Student, Imperial College London