

From Primary Care to EFMI MIE 2025: Rooted in Practice, Inspired by Possibility

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Thanks to the generous support of the Julian Costello Award from BCS PHCSG, I had the privilege of attending the Medical Informatics Europe (MIE) 2025 Conference in Glasgow this May. As a GP trainee with a keen interest in digital health and informatics, this opportunity was more than just professional development - it was a moment of connection, reflection, and deep learning.

The conference opened with a warm welcome from Professor Philip Scott and the Scientific Programme Committee, setting the tone for a week of thoughtful exchange. A symbolic baton handover from Professor John Mantas, Chair of MIE 2024, to Professor Scott marked the start of what would be an intellectually rich programme. In his welcome, Dr John Harden, representing the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland, shared the proverb, "Today's rain is tomorrow's whisky" - a poetic reminder that the work we do now in digital health may take time to mature, but will ultimately yield powerful results.

One of the keynote speakers, Professor Charles Friedman, offered a compelling overview of Learning Health Systems and the potential of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) computable knowledge. His words stayed with me: "AI is a means, not an end." It was a grounding reminder that while we are surrounded by technological excitement, we must remain focused on systems that serve people - not just innovation for its own sake.

The Civic Reception at the Glasgow City Chambers that evening was not only stunning in architecture but also warm in spirit. It was during this event that I began to experience what I'd come to value most about the week: the people. The exchanges over dinner, introductions from kind strangers, and encouragement from peers and mentors would come to define my time at MIE.

On the second day, I gravitated towards sessions rooted in primary care and public health - areas closely tied to my own training. Cecilia Okusi's work on modelling digital maturity at the Oxford-RCGP Research and Surveillance Centre prompted me to think about how digital readiness is measured and what that might look

like in my own context. Professor Philip Scott returned with reflections on computable knowledge and the need to translate data into meaningful clinical action. A talk on machine learning for anomaly detection in epidemiological time series opened my eyes to its potential for proactive public health surveillance.

Later, Gavin Jamie, Simon de Lusignan, John Robinson, and Dai Evans introduced the concept of OMOP (Observational Medical Outcomes Partnership). It was new territory for me, but rather than feel overwhelmed, I felt energised - recognising a knowledge gap and feeling excited to fill it. Dana Goebel's session on AI-based communication in general practice highlighted the generational differences in attitudes toward automation. While digital natives were more open to AI-driven messaging, most patients - regardless of age - still valued human contact. My takeaway was simple: AI in general practice is inevitable, but it must always remain human-centred.

By the third day, I found myself leaning into conversations about health equity, leadership, and system-level transformation. Professor Kathrin Cresswell delivered a powerful keynote on the realities of digital implementation, emphasising the tension between national top-down strategy and the need for local, bottom-up engagement. A session on culturally sensitive text messaging interventions for South Asian patients managing hypertension stood out as a brilliant example of inclusive design - the kind that considers digital barriers from the outset rather than as an afterthought.

While the sessions were intellectually stimulating, it was the in-between moments that added so much depth to the experience. I'm especially grateful to John Robinson, who made a point of introducing me to people I hadn't yet met and regularly checked in throughout the conference. He's someone I look up to - quite literally, thanks to our height difference - and his kindness and humility left a lasting impression. To Ian Thompson, thank you for your practical advice and continued support. It was also lovely meeting other general practitioner/clinical informaticians like them including Vije Rajput, Jung Yin Tsang, James Robert, Dai Evans, Simon de Lusignan, Shankari, Nick Booth, amongst others.

One of my favourite moments was standing near the podium in the main auditorium of the Technology and Innovation Centre, University of Strathclyde - not to present (yet), but to visualise. I imagined returning to MIE not only to listen but to share my own work. That image is still with me, even now, back in practice. It reminds me that leadership and digital change don't start with grand gestures; they begin in small, thoughtful steps - with conversations, curiosity, and community.

I am truly thankful to BCS PHCSG for enabling this experience through the Julian Costello Award. I left Glasgow inspired and grounded, with new insights, deeper connections, and a renewed sense of purpose. I look forward to contributing more actively to the group and to the wider digital health community in the years ahead.