



IET Travel Award Report

2025 Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (ACM CHI)

I am Maria R. Lima, a postdoctoral researcher at Imperial College London and the UK Dementia Research Institute Care Research and Technology Centre. I am incredibly grateful to the Institution of Engineering and Technology for sponsoring my attendance at the 2025 ACM CHI conference in Yokohama, Japan. Thanks to the IET Award, I had the invaluable opportunity to present at a top, highly selective venue in human-computer interaction (HCI), with an acceptance rate <25%. Attending the conference in person allowed me not only to present my work and engage in Q&A, but also connect with leading experts in both research and industry.

On behalf of my co-authors at Imperial and the University of Southern California (USC), I presented our human-robot interaction work which designed and evaluated an LLM-powered socially assistive robot to promote cognitive health in elderly care. Sharing our research with a global, multidisciplinary audience (with over 5500 attendees!) was a huge opportunity... and a little nerve-wracking indeed. But it led to engaging discussions and valuable feedback that helped me think more critically about the real-world applications of our work.

Besides presenting in the main conference track, I was invited to showcase a poster at the workshop “Technology Mediated Caregiving For Older Adults Aging in Place”. This workshop provided a targeted forum to discuss the latest advancements, challenges, and real-world applications of AI assistive technologies for healthy ageing.

The conference offered a rich mix of technical sessions and translational research, aligning perfectly with my research interests, which span robotics and AI for well-being and cognitive health, large language models (LLMs), socially assistive technologies to support elderly and dementia care, and responsible AI. It was inspiring to connect with experts across these fields and explore how my work can really benefit users in the real-world. Another highlight was the strong focus on ethical and responsible AI. As someone deeply engaged in these topics, I really valued engaging in meaningful discussions on the responsible deployment of AI in healthcare and human care contexts.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the IET for supporting and encouraging this unique opportunity among early career researchers.

