

BRITISH ANDROLOGY SOCIETY COMMITTEE

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Note from the Chairman

Bill Holt

Not having been a BAS committee member for several years, then returning to it as Chairman, I couldn't help but notice that the committee's business agenda now has a different focus. Ten years ago we spent a lot of time writing guidelines for donor insemination practice, wondering how many genetic tests and disease assessments should be undertaken when pre-screening semen donors and also deciding which sperm function tests to recommend. At around the same time the HFEA and others began to argue that semen donors should lose their right to anonymity. This was something of a contentious issue and many clinicians forecast the decline and end of semen donation in the UK, something that was hotly denied by ethicists and others. Well, it seems the clinicians were right! When I asked the committee whether we should be revisiting and revising our BAS guidelines it was made very clear to me that there is absolutely no point as they would no longer be relevant. Add to this the transfer of the successful BAS semen analyses courses into the hands of the new organisation, ABA, and I started to wonder whether the role of Chairman has become redundant.

As incoming Chairman I naturally feel that I would like to contribute towards the continued success of BAS. As a biological scientist rather than as a clinician I perceive that for the moment we perhaps need to shift our focus away from clinical matters and try to influence the way that the science of andrology is conducted in the UK. This does not mean the end of clinical interest for the BAS, only a change of emphasis in the way we conduct our business.

Several years ago a group of British scientists were so worried about the decline in most aspects of science support and regeneration that they banded together to form a pressure group called "Save British Science". To their credit they have been successful in raising the profile of science and scientists with government. However, a group of professional biological societies also felt the need, about four years ago, to organise themselves into a lobbying group called the Biosciences Federation. This mirrors the activities of scientific societies in the fields of physics and chemistry, who have well-established contacts with government and wield considerable influence. Today the Biosciences Federation comprises a group of 33 biological societies and is developing as a conduit to Westminster and Whitehall with good contacts in various government departments including the Office of Science and Technology, DEFRA, The Home Office, the scientific select committees and the research and funding councils. They have responded to a number of government consultations on science policy at both national and international levels, as well as commenting on science education in both secondary schools and universities. Examples include specific comments about the way the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise is to be conducted (welcomed by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee) and the use of animals in biomedical research.

To date the BAS has not made any inputs into such matters, so I have started the process of getting ourselves affiliated. This means that our specific expertise will be fed into the responses and we can also add our voice to any lobbying on major issues. We will keep members informed about BSF activities, and we will look into establishing mechanisms by which the membership can review and comment on current matters, as well as suggesting new issues on the horizon and formulating policies and position statements as required.

Further details of the Biosciences Federation can be found at; <http://www.bsf.ac.uk>

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S MESSAGE

This is my second edition of the British Andrology Society Newsletter (I hope you enjoyed the first). As a committee we decided to make a conscious effort to capitalise on our diverse membership and broaden the horizons of the newsletter. Last edition I published a specialised feature on "Gamete Donor Anonymity" by Iwan Lewis Jones which I hope appealed to all readers. In this edition I have decided to feature reports from the diverse conferences and meetings attended by our members including "Sexology by the Sea", the International Conference of Animal Reproduction and the Society for the Study of Reproduction annual meeting.

As the newsletter editor I am very keen to hear from you and what you would like featured in the next edition of the newsletter. These can be topics that you think are important or general information that you think should be brought to the attention of the general BAS readership. I will endeavor to address all issues.

Rez N.S. Prathalingam, Newsletter Editor (nprathalingam@rvc.ac.uk)

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to all the new members of the BAS!

Mr PJ Ashley, Dr A Black, Mr AJ Childs, DR EA GomezDediego, Dr M Mokbel, Ms N Rogers, Dr E Sostaric, Mrs A Surdhar, Dr R Aflatonian

UPDATE MEMBERS EMAIL LIST

Please could the BAS committee request that all members update their email addresses for our records. This can be done by sending your current email address to Dr Alireza Fazeli (A.fazeli@Sheffield.ac.uk). It is possible that in the future information concerning the BAS might be circulated to members using this medium and we would like to ascertain the number of members with email access at present. Thank you.

Sexology by the sea

The European Federation of Sexology recently held its 7th Congress “Together Integrating Sexology” in Brighton between the 12th and 16th of May 2004. The BAS had been invited to take part and Dr Allan Pacey (University of Sheffield) agreed to convene a session on behalf of the society. To a small but select audience, three presentations were given under the broad theme of “Reproductive choices through sperm cryopreservation”.

The first speaker (Marilyn Crawshaw, University of York) outlined some of her work on the “Experiences of the Sperm Banking Process and its aftermath for teenage males with cancer”. Through structured interviews with both health professionals and their teenage patients, she outlined clear themes around choice, decision making, the need for information and managing feelings that should allow anyone involved in providing this service to make improvements to it.

Jane Stewart (Newcastle Fertility Centre) was the session’s second speaker and considered the use of frozen sperm following a man’s death in a talk entitled “Posthumous sperm storage – something for a rainy day”. In this talk she skilfully described the possible emotional and psychological factors that drive a man to give consent for his sperm to be used posthumously and equally important for his partner to wish to use it.

In the final presentation of the session Kathryn Almack (University of Nottingham) explored some of the decision making process in “seeking sperm: access and motivations relating to lesbian couples’ use of donor insemination”. Her work indicated that the decision-making involved a diverse range of issues. Some of these relate to the practicalities of finding a donor, locating a clinic that will accept lesbian couples or finding a man willing to donate sperm.

Other societies taking part in the conference included the British Society of Psychological Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Andrology, The British Association for Sexual Health & HIV and the Royal Society of Medicine. Topics covered include cancer and sexuality, sexual health medicine, issues of sexual function (including erectile dysfunction), gender identity disorders and male sexual dysfunction.

Attendance at the International Congress of Animal Reproduction (ICAR), 8-12 August 2004, Porto Seguro Brazil

The 15th International Congress of Animal Reproduction was an amazing experience, not just because of the location of such a beautiful country as Brazil but also the diversity of the subject areas covered within the week and such a huge attendance. The evening reception on 8th August was interesting: many glasses of wine, beer and cocktails were flowing as well as those wonderful foods of Brazil.

Each day started with a plenary session, followed by a choice of 4 symposia sessions and a choice of 4 workshops to end the afternoon. The Monday's opening session started on genomics. In the afternoon I attended lectures on canine semen evaluation and advanced assisted reproduction technologies (ART) in goats whilst filling my spare time walking through different stalls of publishers and equipment suppliers which included demonstrations of a variety of sperm trackers. Next morning started with "Reproduction and conservation of endangered wildlife". Dr Bill Swanson's talk entitled "International training programs in reproductive sciences for Latin American felids" was an interesting way to start a morning, with information of the lack of nutrition in chicken heads such that captive felids require multi-vitamin supplementation. The poster session was focused on female reproduction with 153 posters. Posters on osteopontin and oviductal activities were of particular interest.

The afternoon session was entitled "Reproduction and fertility in males", which I felt was the most relevant session for my current research. The first speaker, Dr Bart Gadella focussed on the role of bicarbonate in mammalian sperm function that summarised the effect of bicarbonate on processes involving changes in plasma membranes, the rearrangement of cholesterol and its redistribution via bicarbonate mediated signalling. This was followed by two talks on the "Post-testicular sperm environment and fertility" and "Techniques available to test markers of male fertility". For the final session, I attended a workshop on new tools for semen evaluation, tools included sperm-selection by swim-up methods, low dose insemination techniques and the relationships between sperm-oviduct interactions.

The penultimate day was spent with a plenary session on new developments in reproductive technology and posters of male reproduction followed by an afternoon at the Water Park (and yes that was organised by the conference). The final morning started with "The role of oviduct secretion in sperm function, fertilisation and embryo development" by Dr Gary Killian's, which was an enlightening and of particular interest to my current research. The final poster session allowed me the opportunity to talk many researchers about my poster. It was interesting to discuss mutual problems I have encountered with other researchers as well as implications of the meaning of my results. We ended the Conference with a banquet at the Water Park and live local entertainment featuring Capoiara dancing and a disco.

The ICAR conference was an eye opening experience covering a wide range in subjects of reproduction. I felt very privileged to have been able to attend and would like to thank

my supervisors, British Andrology Society and Society for Reproduction and Fertility for providing the funding that enabled this journey.

The Society for the Study of Reproduction's (SSR) 37th Annual Meeting, August 1-4th 2004.

The University of British Columbia in Vancouver welcomed more than one-thousand reproductive biologists and trainees from all across the World to the Society for the Study of Reproduction's (SSR) 37th Annual Meeting, August 1-4th 2004. The scientific program included 824 scientific abstracts, a great many of which were presented in platform format. The meeting began early on Sunday morning with the 'Techniques in Reproductive Biology Workshop', which consisted of three lectures, each illustrating how valuable genetic techniques and approaches are in the study of reproductive biology. The Society's president Dr. Mary Hunzicker-Dunn officially opened the meeting, and society awards were presented to Dr. Fuller Bazer for his many years of outstanding scholarly contributions to the field of reproductive biology and to Dr. Anita Payne for her unselfish service and leadership in advancing the field of reproductive biology. The ceremony continued with the recognition of a number of SSR trainee members who had received merit awards on the basis of the quality of their submitted abstract. This was a particular highlight for me, as I was called onstage to collect my USDA National Research Initiative award certificate. Dr. David Page then presented the first Keynote address, 'Genes, Gender, and Germ Cells', which set the tone of the meeting. That evening, meeting attendees were welcomed at an opening reception in the elegant Rose Garden situated on cliffs overlooking the ocean and mountains.

I was surprised by how many posters and presentations I managed to see over just three-and-a-half days. In particular I found Tuesday morning's State-of-the-Art Lecture given by Dr. Patricia Hunt, titled 'Human Aneuploidy: Learning from our Mistakes' extremely informative. Dr. Neils Geisen's talk, also given on the Tuesday morning, on 'In vitro Generation of Male Germ Cells from Embryonic Stem Cells' clearly showed some of the advances that have been made in that area. Throughout the conference it was possible to view a great variety of excellent posters. Of particular interest to me were two 'Female Reproductive Tract' poster sessions which took place on the Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. Full details of the scientific program can be accessed online at <http://www.ssr.org/Meetings.html>.

This was my first experience attending an international meeting of this scale. What impressed me most was seeing an incredibly large amount of high quality work, across such a wide range of reproductive fields. It was inspiring. I presented my work on sperm-oviduct interaction, in a platform session, on the Tuesday evening. It seemed to be well received. I found the comments and criticisms extremely useful. The meeting concluded in time to witness a spectacular fireworks display in Vancouver Harbour.

Stephen Georgiou (PhD. Student)

Travel Grant Applications

BAS Travel awards are available to successful applicants for travel to national and international conferences- so apply today.

To qualify for an award, applicants must have been a BAS member for atleast one year, or a student member for six months. Only one BAS travel grant per applicant will be awarded in a 2 year period and the maximum award value is £250. Successful applicants will be required to write a report on the conference attended for the BAS newsletter.

If you would like to apply for a travel grant, complete the travel grant application form (<http://www.britishandrology.org.uk>) and return it t the BAS treasurer (Mark Curry mrcurry@dmu.ac.uk).

Applications will be assessed in April and September.

BAS Annual Meeting

(2-5 April 2005, The University of Warwick)

The next BAS meeting will be held in conjunction with the Society of Reproduction and Fertility meeting in Warwick on the 2nd-5th of April 2005. There will be a chance to listen to some world-class speakers that you will have perhaps not had the chance to meet. A student oral free communications prize session is also being organised for the event. The winner will walk away with a prize of £250 (now there's a reason to take part!) Deadline for submission of an abstract is 1st December 2004 so get cracking - it's a great way to show off your hard earned work and get your face recognised

If you are a student and a member of the BAS there is plenty to look forward to this year at the BAS and if you are not yet a member there are plenty of reasons to join:

- You can purchase a full years student membership of the BAS for a fee of £5 (bargain!). Plus, apply for grants up to the value of £250 (see below for details).
- Student members of the BAS are entitled to apply for an award to travel to national and international conferences - so apply today! To qualify for an award you must have been a BAS member for at least 6 months by the date of travel. BAS members can apply for one travel grant every two years and each application can be up to a maximum of £250. As a token of your appreciation all you have to do is make the most out of the conference and oh yes, write a short report on the conference for our newsletter! Deadlines for applications are twice a year in April and September.
- Travel grant application forms can be found on (the BAS website) (http://www.britishandrology.org.uk/travel_grant.htm).

Attending BAS conferences will allow you to have lots of fun while making those all-important contacts! A postgradoc lunch, meeting your fellow peers and organized student events are just some of the reasons to join the BAS You will also be eligible for discounted registration and if you presenting you will automatically be entered for the BAS oral communication prize! If you have any concerns, questions or you would like to contribute to the BAS newsletter I would love to hear from you. My contact details are at the bottom of the page.

Nina Rogers

Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT. Email: n.rogers@ucl.ac.uk

DIARY DATES

2004

60th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM 2004)

Philadelphia, PA, USA

16-21 October 2004

Contact: ASRM (asrm@asrm.org)

BAS Annual Meeting

The University of Lincoln, 5-6 November 2004 The annual meeting of the British Andrology Society (email: mcurry@lincoln.ac.uk)

Legal & Ethical Issues in Reproduction Medicine

Imperial College, London

8 November 2004

Contact: sympreg@imperial.ac.uk

National Osteoporosis Society 10th Conference

Harrogate International Centre, UK

28 November-1 December 2004

Contact: Janet Crompton (Janet@Janet-crompton.com)

BFS Winter Meeting

RCOG, London

1-2 December 2004

Contact Tamara Lloyd (Tel: +44 (0)1454 642217)

2005

31st Annual Conference of the International Embryo Transfer Society

9-11 January 2005

Copenhagen, Denmark

Contact: iets@assoqh.org

All India Congress of Obstetrics & Gynaecology - AICOG 2005

Aurangabad, India

6-9 January 2005

Contact conference@aicog2005.com

Copenhagen Workshop on Environment, Reproductive Health and Fertility

Copenhagen, Denmark

15-18 January 2005
Contact: ses@rh.dk

52nd Annual Meeting of the Society for Gynecologic Investigation (SGI)

23-25 March 2005
Los Angeles, California, USA
Contact: Linda Gildersleeve (lgilders@acog.org)

American Society of Andrology 30th Annual Conference

Seattle, Washington
30 March – 6 April 2005
Contact: <http://www.andrologysociety.com/default.asp>

Fertility 2005, Warwick University, 2-6 April 2005

The S For more information on this event, please contact the BAS Programme Secretary (Lisa Thurston, lthurston@rvc.ac.uk) or the conference organisers:

Debbie Walker / Stephanie Harris, World Event Management,
Summit House, Woodland Park, Cleckheaton BD19 6BW
Tel: 01274 854100 / Fax: 01274 854110 / Email: fertility2005@world-events.com
Society of Reproduction and Fertility

BES 2005: 24th Joint Meeting of British Endocrine Societies

Harrogate, UK
4-7 April 2005
Contact: Society for Endocrinology (conferences@endocrinology.org)

Annual Meeting of the British Association for Animal Science (BSAS) 2005

Venue to be confirmed
4-6 April 2005
Contact: British Society of Animal Science (BSAS@ed.sac.ac.uk)

XII World Congress on Human Reproduction

Venice, Italy
14-17 April 2005
Contact: biomedical@tin.it

Sixth International Symposium on Preimplantation Genetics

QEII Conference Centre, London, UK
19-22 May 2005
Contact: Refik Kutler, Position: Symposium Organiser
Telephone: +90 312 440 56 00 Email: info@pgdlondon.org

Inconceivable Conceptions: The Psychology of Fertility

The Royal Society of Medicine, London

20th May 2005
Contact: June Ansell
Tel 020 7935 3103 Email: member@gapractice.org.uk

8th International Congress of Andrology
Sheraton Grande Walkerhill Hotel, Seoul, Korea
10-15 June 2005
Contact: Ally Kim (ica2005@meci.co.kr)

The 25th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Immunology
Rhode Island
16-19 June 2005
Contact: Surendra Sharma (SSHARMA@wihri.org)

21st Annual Meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction & Embryology (ESHRE)
Copenhagen, Denmark
19-22 June 2005
Contact: ESHRE Central Office (info@eshre.com)

Society for the Study of Reproduction (SSR) Annual Conference 2005
Quebec City, Quebec, Canada
24-27 July 2005
Contact: Prof. Marc-Andre Sirard (marc-andre.sirard@crbr.ulaval.ca)

Society for Reproductive Biology (joint with the Endocrine Society of Australia)
Perth, Australia
Dates to be confirmed

European Congress of Endocrinology 2005
Göteborg, Sweden
3-7 September 2005
Contact: Congrex Göteborg AB, Ref. ECE 2005 (ece2005@gbg.congrex.se)

61st Annual Meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM 2005)
Montréal, Québec, Canada
15-21 October 2005
Contact: ASRM (asrm@asrm.org)

2006

BES 2006: 25th Joint Meeting of British Endocrine Societies
Bournemouth, UK

12-16 March 2006

Contact: Society for Endocrinology (conferences@endocrinology.org)

Annual Meeting of the British Association for Animal Science (BSAS) 2006

Venue to be confirmed

10-12 April 2006

Contact: British Society of Animal Science (BSAS@ed.sac.ac.uk)

American Society of Andrology 31st Annual Conference

Chicago, Illinois

8-11 April 2005

Contact: <http://www.andrologysociety.com/default.asp>