

BRITISH ANDROLOGY SOCIETY COMMITTEE

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<http://www.britishandrology.org.uk>

Chairman's Message

I am delighted to write this short article as my first BAS contribution as the new Chairman. I offer a few thoughts and reminiscences that I hope will stir some memories and also some action.

Nearly thirty years ago I received a letter from Brian Setchell suggesting that there was a need for a new scientific society with a specific focus on aspects of male reproductive biology and medicine. Shortly afterwards we held a meeting at the Royal Society of Medicine, and formed the "British Andrology Group", which later turned into the BAS.

The early meetings were a revelation for those like me who worked on the gamete biology of laboratory animals. Vividly illustrated lectures about surgical approaches to impotence in humans, or methods of obtaining human spermatozoa for infertility treatment were major sources of interest for later conversations at the bar. Having attended most of the annual meetings there are obviously some highlights to remember, both scientific and social. At one annual meeting in Manchester, the delegates' hotel had double booked the rooms, leaving one poor receptionist to explain the situation to dozens of irate andrologists! The proprietor wisely made herself scarce. The society has had its scientific highlights, one of them being a meeting about capacitation, which I helped to organise with Robin Harrison and Lynn Fraser. For that meeting we drew up a wish list of speakers, invited them all and said "by the way, we can't pay your expenses!" Amazingly, not a single speaker declined the invitation.

Besides its scientific work, the Society has also been influential in improving the standards of clinical andrology in the UK and elsewhere. The introduction of a national quality control scheme for andrologists, coupled with the establishment and regular organisation of technical training courses for andrologists has increased the standards of laboratory practice no end. One of the early quality control exercises returned semen analysis data that showed that a given patient might be classed as infertile by one laboratory while meeting the standards for semen donation in another. I don't think such huge discrepancies arise any longer, mainly thanks to the BAS.

Turning to the future, I would like to see the BAS become even stronger in both the scientific and clinical arenas. We should continue our work at the forefront of clinical andrology, perhaps concentrating more on the advisory aspects now that the technical training is being handled by the spin-off organisation ABA. We should also make our voice heard at the level of government, alongside other societies who lobby on behalf of British science. Having been involved with the Biosciences Federation, a group of 30 scientific societies, since its establishment about two years ago, I would like to see the BAS adding its weight to their efforts.

As always, the next few years will continue to see the BAS face up to new and evolving challenges. Your previous Chairman Iwan Lewis-Jones, very ably helped the BAS to face these challenges over the last few years and I would very much like to thank him for the time, energy and thought he invested. He will be a hard act to follow and I therefore urge the members to help foster the activities of the society in any way they can. We will continue to need representatives for national committees

and people willing to organise meetings and workshops. Importantly, we also need members with bright ideas to come forward and take on some of these active roles.

Bill Holt (bill.holt@ioz.ac.uk)

Newsletter Editors Message

As the new newsletter editor for BAS I found it both challenging and interesting to be able to edit a publication that has such a broad spectrum of expertise within the same field. The British Andrology Society membership covers a broad range of fields from the human clinical field and veterinarians to agriculturalists and conservationists. I feel that this newsletter and the society as a whole has the advantage of allowing andrologists across this broad spectrum to exchange views and ideas, with the mutual goal of improving our understanding of andrology and putting this into practice. I hope the current members of the society feel the same way and would like to take this opportunity to stress that this newsletter is a forum for all andrologists and your contributions. I would like to encourage input from the readers, either as areas you feel that are important to address, which I will attempt to tackle or as written articles that will benefit the readership.

Finally I would like to thank Lisa Thurston for the previous issues of the BAS newsletter and the contributions to this newsletter.

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

Gamete donor anonymity – the end of a service?

The British Department of Health, Parliament and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) have decided that the rights of the child is such, that he/she should be able to readily access the identity of their biological parent.¹ This includes children conceived using donor gametes (sperm and eggs).

The main indication for donor sperm insemination is after a diagnosis of azoospermia (absent sperm) or severe oligospermia (very low sperm count) in men. It can be considered after vasectomy, failed vasectomy reversal, for ejaculatory dysfunctions, and sometimes after chemotherapy or radiotherapy in cancer survivors. For the most part, the National Health Service (NHS) provides only limited provision for this service, which is heavily affected by the 'postcode lottery'. Oocyte donation is indicated when a woman is affected by, or is a known carrier of a serious genetic disease in which her ovaries are absent, or the ovaries may be non-functioning or unlikely to respond to ovulation induction. There is already a shortage of sperm donors and a significant shortage in egg donors resulting in long waiting lists, regardless of the funding source. Embryo donation is also available if couples donate them.

Currently, individuals who suspect that they might have been born as a result of donor-assisted conception can, at the age of 18 (or at 16 if they are intending to marry), contact the register kept at the HFEA to find out whether they were conceived in this way and if so, whether they are related to someone they intend to marry. The individual can view a 'pen-picture' (non identifying information) of the donor, if the donor has made one. A large proportion of donors do not make a pen-picture of themselves. The identity of the donor is kept strictly confidential. Any given donor is restricted to the number of children that can be created from his/her gametes, currently 10 families.

Although we applaud the political attention to the gamete donation service in the UK, we would rather it focus on increasing NHS funding provision and availability. This could be within the NICE guidelines in infertility services, due to be released shortly. Screening protocols probably do need updating with reference to genetic disease testing. However there is real concern that removing the anonymity of gamete donors will deter people from volunteering for this important area of infertility treatment, resulting in service collapse. Reassurances of immunity from child maintenance costs can be little comfort to someone considering gamete donation. The psychological impact of a young person aged 18 approaching one in 18 years' time, is quite psychologically daunting.

There is no data on patient's attitude to donor anonymity, although through observation, most clinicians think that the majority of recipients of donated gametes prefer an anonymous donor. The removal of donor anonymity takes away the rights of the patients to choose between using an anonymous donor or an identifiable one. Therefore Reproductive Medicine and the HFEA should explore the recruitment of both anonymous and identifiable donors, which would give the rights of confidentiality to parents should they wish it, whilst accommodating the rights to identification to those who believe a child's rights are paramount.

¹ HFEA response to the Department of Health consultation on ‘Donor information: providing information about sperm, egg and embryo donors’. July 2002.

Andrew Drakeley, MRCOG, Subspecialty Trainee in Reproductive Medicine
Stephanie Curran, RGN, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Donor Insemination Co-ordinator
Maureen Richards, RGN, Senior Sister, Ovum Donation Co-ordinator
Rafet Gazvani, MD MRCOG, Subspecialist in Reproductive Medicine
DI Lewis-Jones, MD, Consultant Andrologist
Charles Kingsland, MD MRCOG, Consultant Gynaecologist and Head of
Reproductive Medicine Unit
Liverpool Women’s Hospital, Crown Street, Liverpool L8 7SS

A New Committee Members Message

I am delighted to become a committee member of the British Andrology Society. My introduction to the BAS was attending various conferences and workshops and I have never been disappointed in the excellent standard of science and the fantastic social functions. During the next 3 years I would like to contribute to maintaining the high standards previously set for the BAS.

I hope that my scientific and professional background will play a role in further increasing the diverse and multidisciplinary outlook of the BAS committee. I have worked for GlaxoSmithKline Research and Development in Safety Assessment for 15 years. The role of Safety Assessment in developing new medicines for the treatment of serious disease is to evaluate what the possible risks of new chemical entities may be before humans are exposed. I am particularly interested in the toxic effects on reproduction especially effects on spermatogenesis. In order to fulfill the role of safety assessment the normal reproductive biology of model animal species must be appreciated so that when there is disruption the mechanism of toxicity can be elucidated. Moreover, since model animal species are used there is always the need to extrapolate to relevance to the human.

A long time ago I was awarded a degree in Biology from the University of Manchester. While working as a toxicologist I studied part-time towards a PhD degree with Dr Richard Sharpe (Centre for Reproductive Biology in Edinburgh) completing a thesis titled "The novel testicular toxicity of a 5HT1 agonist" in 1997. After this I was involved in a 3 year collaborative project (with Debbie Garside) funded by the European Community evaluating the use of in vitro methods in detection, characterisation and mechanism of action of testicular toxicity.

Jacqui Piner, Jacqui.A.Piner@gsk.com

Membership secretary's message

New Members

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

Mr. J. N. E. Ana, Mr. K. Economou, Miss A. Fairlie-Clarke, Miss S. K. Foley, Miss E. Harmer, Dr G. Kutvolgyi, Dr C.M. McVicar, Miss F. Moseley, Miss N. Satake, Mr F. Shamsaei, Mrs. J.M. Sheader, Dr. J. Stewart, Mr J. Walsh, Dr. L. Whan

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.

Postgradoc Page

Hello Fellow BAS Students,

I would like to welcome all BAS students to a new spring year at BAS. I have been elected to replace Lisa Thurston (who stepped down earlier this year) as your new Postgradoc student representative. If you have any concerns, questions or even ideas for your fellow students 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 page. Welcome! If you are a student and a member of the BAS there is plenty to look forward to this year 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! (That's equivalent to two coffees at Starbucks!)

- ❖ As a student representative I would recommend that you take advantage of the incentives available to students at BAS conferences. Student members 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).

- ❖ There are special incentives for students attending BAS conferences, which include a postgradoc lunch where you will have lots of fun, meet your fellow peers and make those all important contacts! You will also be eligible for discounted registration and if you presenting you will automatically be entered for the BAS oral communication prize!

- ❖ Finally it has just been confirmed that the next BAS conference will take place in Lincoln in November 2004. A student poster prize session has been organized for the conference, so get preparing - It's a great way to show off all your hard earned research and get your face recognized. A prize of £100 will be presented to the winner at the conference dinner. Watch this space to find out more or log on to the BAS website (<http://www.britishandrology.org.uk>).

Nina Rogers, n.rogers@ucl.ac.uk

Conferences



Annual Meeting 5-6 November 2004 Lincoln

THE UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN, 5-6 NOVEMBER 2004

The annual meeting of the British Andrology Society

PROGRAMME

- The scientific programme will include:
- international symposia on Spermatogenesis
- postgradoc poster prize
- oral free communications
- poster sessions
- pre-meeting ABA workshop (to be confirmed)
- postgradoc wine reception
- BAS AGM
- Trade exhibition

As expected an exciting social programme is being planned to provide BAS members with the opportunity to meet colleagues and peers in informal settings, as well as at the Conference Dinner.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

The beautiful Lincoln Cathedral provides an impressive backdrop to the state-of-the-art £60 million Lincoln University campus. A Learning Support and Media Production centre houses library, computing facilities and fully equipped, industry standard, media suites. The 1,000 bedroom student village is right on campus, 5 minutes from the main buildings and the campus is just 5 minutes from the city centre.

LINCOLN

Lincoln is a bustling centre of industry and commerce. The city is an exciting mix of old and new. You can't miss the impressive Lincoln Cathedral perched on top of Steep Hill. As you wander down the narrow cobbled streets of Steep Hill (try walking up it

and you'll know!) past the specialty shops you will come into the main shopping area of Lincoln with the, usual High Street retailers. The nightlife has exploded with many new pubs, clubs to suit all music tastes and a new 9-screen cinema opposite the university. If you fancy a bit of culture then book into a show at the Theatre Royal or catch one of the outdoor performances in the beautiful setting of the Bishop's Palace. For a bite to eat you'll be spoilt for choice with a selection of Indian restaurants on the High Street, French, Thai, Mexican and traditional food in the Bailgate and many other restaurants dotted around the city.

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

Dr Mark Curry

Biology Department, The University of Lincoln, Riseholme Park, Lincoln, Lincs.
LN2 2LG

Tel: +44 (0) 1522 895440, Fax: +44 (0) 1522 545436, e-mail: mrcurry@dmu.ac.uk



WARWICK UNIVERSITY, 2-6 APRIL 2005

Fertility 2005 is a joint conference of the UK Fertility Societies: British Andrology Society (BAS), British Fertility Society (BFS) and Society of Reproduction and Fertility (SRF).

PROGRAMME

The scientific programme will include:

- 3 international symposia (Genetics of Infertility - Influences on Embryo Development - Germ Cell Interactions)
- 3 plenary lectures (HS Jacobs Presidential Lecture - Patrick Steptoe Memorial Lecture - SRF Distinguished Scientist Lecture)
- new investigator / exchange lectures
- BAS, BFS and SRF prize sessions
- oral free communications
- poster sessions
- nurse and counsellor sessions
- pre meeting workshops (BAS workshop)

In addition, there will be a trade exhibition and sponsorship opportunities.

WARWICK UNIVERSITY

The conference will take place mainly within the Arts Centre of Warwick University and registration fees will include en-suite accommodation on a first come first served basis on the university campus. The university has excellent meeting facilities including a large lecture theatre, gallery for exhibition stands and numerous breakout rooms. In addition there are several bars/cafes, an ATM machine, supermarket and cinema.

WARWICK

Warwick offers visitors today the opportunity of exploring not only the architectural gems of this medieval history but also those of the more recent past and the modern vibrant life of the county town of Warwickshire.

The town of Warwick was founded on the banks of the River Avon in 914 AD by Ethelfleda, sister of Edward the Elder, as a defence against the Danish invaders, on a site overlooking earlier riverside settlements. It is built on a small hill which controlled not only the river valley but also the river crossing on the road to London and the roads to Stratford, Coventry and the salt way to Droitwich.

Many of the central streets of the town were destroyed by the Great Fire of 1694. The buildings which were burnt, and many which were not, were re-built in the handsome style of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Several important medieval buildings survived the fire and can be seen to this day, notably the town's medieval Guildhall, now the Lord Leycester Hospital, as well as a group of timber - framed buildings around Oken's House.

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

.....And A Final Word

As the new Programme Secretary, I would like to encourage the membership to become more interactive!!! I am conscious that the BAS committee, although always acting in the best interests of the BAS members, cannot always predict which research topics the membership as a whole would like to see included in its annual meetings. With the advent of biannual joint conferences with our sister fertility societies (the British Fertility Society and the Society for Reproduction and Fertility), it is even more important to maintain the quality of science presented at conferences and to promote the identity of the BAS under the joint fertility societies umbrella. Therefore, I would like to ask that you let me know which areas of research you feel would produce stimulating symposium presentations and subsequent discussions. Furthermore, if any members would like to take on the responsibility (and honour!) of organising a BAS meeting please do not hesitate to contact me.

I would like to thank the previous BAS Programme Secretary, Melanie Griffiths, who has worked tirelessly for many years to ensure that the quality of science presented at BAS meetings remains outstanding and that symposium topics are always at the forefront of andrology research. Thank you Melanie for your commitment and perseverance.

Many thanks also to Ian Brewis for his admirable contribution to the BAS committee. The society wishes Ian the best of luck in his new post at the University of Cardiff.

Lisa Thurston, Programme Secretary (lthurston@rvc.ac.uk)

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 at least one year, or a student member for six months. Only one BAS travel grant per applicant will be awarded in a 2 years 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 (www.britishandrology.org.uk) and return it to the BAS treasurer (Mark Curry, mrcurry@dmu.ac.uk). Applications are assessed in April and September.]

DIARY DATES

2004

16th International Symposium of the Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Tyrol, Austria

5-8 June 2004

Contact: Prof. JR Pasqualini (Jorge.Pasqualini@wanadoo.fr)

13th International Workshop on the Development and Function of the Reproductive Organs

Copenhagen, Denmark

12-16 June 2004

Contact: Congress Secretariat (repro2004@ics.dk)

20th Annual Meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction & Embryology (ESHRE)

Berlin, Germany

27-30 June 2004

Contact: ESHRE Central Office (info@eshre.com)

Society for Endocrinology Molecular Endocrinology Workshop

Oxford, UK

13 July 2004

Contact: Ann Lloyd, Society for Endocrinology (info@endocrinology.org)

7th International Symposium on Neurobiology and Neuroendocrinology of Ageing

Kloster Mehrerau, Bregenz, Austria

18-23 July 2004

Contact: Andrzej Bartke (abartke@siumed.edu)

Society for the Study of Reproduction (SSR) Annual Conference 2004

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

31 July-4 August 2004

Contact: Prof. Peter C.K. Leung (peleung@interchange.ubc.ca)

Satellite Symposium on Reproduction in Small Ruminants

Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay

5-6 August 2004

Contact: Elize van Lier (rsr2004@adinet.com.uy)

15th International Congress on Animal Reproduction (ICAR)

Salvador, Brazil

8-12 August 2004

Contact: Brazilian College of Animal Reproduction (cbra@cbra.org.br)

Society for Reproductive Biology (joint with the Endocrine Society of Australia)
Sydney, Australia
22-25 August 2004
Contact: Mike Pickford (esa-srb@asnevents.net.au)

Fifth Royan International Research Award's Scientific Congress on Reproductive Biomedicine
Tehran, Iran
2-4 September 2004
Contact: Kamel Alizadeh (info@royaninstitute.org)

The 5th Royan International Reserach Award
Reproductive Biomedicine
Sep 2004, Tehran – Iran (Info@RoyanInstitute.org)

International Congress of Endocrinology (ICE) 2004
Lisbon, Portugal
1-4 September 2004
Contact: ISE General Secretary (l.h.rees@mds.qmw.ac.uk)

3rd European Congress of Andrology/Annual Meeting of the German Andrology Society
Sept 11-14, 2004, Munster, Germany, Contact Trevor Cooper (email: cooper@uni-muenster.de)

XIX European Congress on Perinatal Medicine
Athens, Greece
14-16 October 2004
Contact: Pieretta Doukakou (pdoukakou@cnc.gr)

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)

2005

52nd Annual Meeting of the Society for Gynecologic Investigation (SGI)
23-25 March 2005
Los Angeles, California, USA
Contact: Linda Gildersleeve (lgilders@acog.org)

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

8th International Congress of Andrology

Sheraton Grande Walkerhill Hotel, Seoul, Korea

10-15 June 2005

Contact: Ally Kim (ica2005@meci.co.kr)

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)

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)