

Chair's Report at Annual General Meeting 24 June 2016

Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger St, London WC1N 2 JU

It is my pleasure to give this, my fifth annual Chair's report. I must begin by thanking the whole committee for their support throughout the past year. Special thanks are due to our secretary Jackson and our treasurer David. Thanks also to Sarah and Emma our administrators, for working closely with Jackson on the web as well as taking care of our subscriptions and the organization of this meeting. I would also like to publicly thank Roy who stood down during the year due to ill health. He was a committed member of the Executive committee and we really appreciated his endeavours to promote fund raising. Thanks to Ben, our BAS trainee executive member for his input as this year's move from our conventional annual conference to this our second Andrology Open Floor format aimed at young andrologists. I think you will agree that it has been this morning has been a great success. The facilities have been great so my thanks as well to Jacqui Piner for suggesting them.

During 2015-2016, we have widened our influence with a number of our Executive committee sitting on other important scientific committees

I have been part of the HFEA Scientific Advances Advisory Committee. This is an exciting time in reproductive research with issues such as genome editing and up-dating legislation to extend human life in vitro The applications and debates have been enthusiastic and it is also good to stay in touch with new HFEA strategies. In particular, look out for the new website coming soon with traffic lighting to guide patients about good, not so good and poor add ons to ART treatments.

I also sit on the National Gamete Donor Trust Advisory Board.

In March I also went, as an observer on behalf of BAS, to attend a meeting of the NICE standing committee discussing an update on their recommendations regarding IUI treatment. As you may know, in 2013 NICE made a recommendation that IUI should not continue to be offered in fertility Clinics.

This is an issue of considerable importance to BAS. In fact, Jackson and Bryan Woodward of ABA have just co-authored a review paper expressing the views of our two societies. Following the meeting I wrote a response to NICE and have also responded formally to their consultation.

We would request NICE to reconsider, using the comparison of IUI with IVF and thus allow the standing committee to take into consideration a number of new, robust and pertinent studies listed below with summary findings. To make a recommendation on this issue, a number of sub-questions must also be explored.

- Couple selection regimes: which couples should be offered IUI?
- Do live births increase with IUI stimulation?
- If so, which antagonist regimes are best?
- How can multiple pregnancies be prevented?
- Is the timing of IUI important in terms of stimulation and time after semen preparation?
- If IUI and IVF are equally successful, which is more cost effective?

Further, since definite answers cannot yet be made in some areas due to lack of evidence, we would request NICE to keep the recommendation open rather than publishing a blanket recommendation against IUI even in medically appropriate cases and restricting its use to only 'exceptional circumstances of social, cultural or religious objections to IVF.'

I am also attending their follow up meeting on Monday in Manchester to observe their discussion of responses from all our sister societies.

Jackson sits on the HFEA Professional Stakeholder Group and the DoH team overseeing implementation of new coding and import directions.

Nabil has sat on the NICE Committee examining Quality Assurance
Bill represents us on The Royal Society of Biology given a royal charter last year.
Asif represents us on BAUS and has been elected Chair of their Andrology Section and
Martin represents us on the journal: Human Fertility.

Events during year

The third successful Clinical Laboratory Andrology / BSAC (JKB/SM) with 18 attendees and 16 passes. The course ran at a profit of £8000.

Press & Media

Finally, throughout the year Jackson and I have represented BAS on the Science Media Centre and commented on numerous controversial papers prior to publication to interpret them objectively for the public.

Grant Schemes & Charitable Giving

As a means to increasing our funds and raising our public profile, as is a must for any charity, Bill is writing a paper on fundraising and strategy. This was welcomed and supported by the committee as a way ahead for the Society to explore whilst respecting our charitable status aims and current abilities. Bill has been given go ahead to form his proposed committee and create a relevant guideline document for its operation to be considered by the executive at a future meeting.

The Fertility Show

Since the last two years' stand of UK Professional Fertility Societies was such a success we have agreed to take part again this November, London. Jackson put enormous effort into designing and producing leaflets for couples and they were so well received that BFS suggested making them available for every Fertility Clinic Waiting room. We are designing further more detailed information for this year. We are collaborating with Nick Fenning to implement this by writing the male fertility leaflets and also updating the male fact sheets for INUK.

At a Board to Board meeting in April, we all decided NOT to take part in the Routes to Parenthood as numbers attending were small. Also at this meeting, BFS said that from 2017, they will no longer running stand-alone BFS annual meetings. In future, each annual conference will be a joint Fertility forum and include ACE, BICA, and any other reproductive societies that wish to join them.

Possible Mergers

Given our discussion at the 2014 AGM that the BAS membership is reducing year on year, the numbers of members supporting our annual conferences, however excellent the programme are disappointing and although the Society's accounts are currently in reasonable order, we don't have the reserves of other societies such as BFS or SRF. In general, our annual meetings need to make a profit to keep us afloat. Last year we made the strategic decision to not have attendance fees for these event for members so we will clearly be making a small loss of around £2500 but we felt this was a useful commitment of our charitable funds and in agreement with the Charity's objectives.

One strategy for survival is to merge with another group with similar aims so last year we had significant talks with Association of Biomedical Andrologists; ABA with a view to examine how a possible merger of the two groups may work. ABA were to discuss our proposal in detail at their next Executive meeting and respond to us. This didn't reach any satisfactory conclusion with ABA not wishing to consider a merger at this time.

The latest proposal supported by Association of Clinical Embryologists is to form a merger group of ACE, BAS and ABA and call ourselves BARS- British Association of Reproductive Scientists.

The Andrology Scientist Training programme has made this particularly timely as the MSc career structures are closely integrated with clinical embryologists with regard to ongoing scientific research and training throughout working life. Watch this space.

In closing, I believe there is still an important role for The British Andrology Society as the Executive Committee, we will continue to pursue innovative strategies to ensure our future with Andrology embedded as a unique speciality.