

Chair's Report at Annual General Meeting 19 June 2017

Linnean Society, Piccadilly, London

It is my pleasure to give this, my sixth 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 our administrator, for working closely with Jackson on the web as well as taking care of our subscriptions and the organization of this meeting.

Thanks for Bill and Jacqui who organised this historic venue. I feel very honoured and enthused to be here.

Things have changed rather since the days of Carl Linnaeus, the first recorded scientist who attempted to bring order to what we knew about the animal and plant kingdoms through Taxonomy, the science of identifying, naming and classifying organisms in 1748.

In those days, the study of Science was restricted to the wealthy with independent means . Linnaeus was poor so he first looked for a career that would give him a reasonable income. He first studied medicine but his passion was to extend the use of plants, minerals and animals to cure and alleviate pain. He spent his time off in the University's botanical garden until his dedication and knowledge in Taxonomy was recognised by a senior academic who invited him to become a lecturer in Uppsala University in Stockholm.

One interesting fact for you was it was due to his influence that the Royal Navy sent naturalists on all their voyages, including Charles Darwin.

However, the same characteristics still drive scientists today-

Curiosity, accuracy, passion, tenacity, collaboration, -those are the cornerstones for progress.

Today we host our third Andrology Open Floor format aimed at giving young andrologists an opportunity to present and discuss their work. I think you will agree that it has been this morning has been another great success.

During 2016-2017, BAS has continued to exert its influence with a number of our Executive committee sitting on other important scientific committees

I continue to sit on the HFEA Scientific and Clinical Advances Advisory Committee or SCAAC.

This is an exciting time in reproductive research. SCAAC discusses with progress with pure science from SNP arrays and mitochondrial quantitation through to the still thorny debate as to the benefits of pre-implantation genetic screening. The HFEA also prepares detailed ongoing reviews of Health outcomes of ART children and monitors the use of ICSI. Debates on committee are vigorous and it is good to stay in touch with new HFEA strategies. In particular, the new website coming this autumn with traffic lighting to guide patients about good, not so good and poor add ons to ART treatments.

I also sit on the National Donor Gamete Trust Advisory Board. However, this committee hasn't sat this year due to ongoing reorganisation.

Bill continues to represent us on The Royal Society of Biology given a royal charter last year. Asif represents us on BAUS and is Chair of their Andrology Section and Martin represents us on the journal: Human Fertility.

Events during year - Jackson The fourth successful Clinical Laboratory Andrology / BSAC (JKB/SM) with 18 attendees and 16 passes. The course ran at a profit of £8000.

Press & Media

Profile through Media and press

Jackson

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.

Research Committee- Bill

Joint Fertility Societies

You can read the joint statement on our BAS website.

	<h1>Associated Fertility Societies</h1>
	<p>A group of like-minded societies within medicine, science and biology, sharing common interests in fertility and reproduction, with the shared purpose of advancing scientific knowledge and research, promoting excellence in training and education and establishing best clinical practice, as well as educating and informing the wider public</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association of Biomedical Andrologists (ABA) • Association of Clinical Embryologists (ACE) • British Andrology Society (BAS) • British Fertility Society (BFS) • British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA) • Senior Infertility Nurses Group (SING) • Society for Reproduction and Fertility (SRF)

From next year, each annual conference will be a joint Fertility forum and include ACE, BICA, and any other reproductive societies that wish to join them. We hope to join them in 2018 in Liverpool.

The Fertility Show

Since the last three 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. This information is available on our website.

Merger of Reproductive Scientists

The current 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.

Representatives from BAS met with BFS and ABA in Edinburgh 2017.

We all agreed that we were in favour in principle of some form of joining forces but each

committee was to go back to their respective societies, send their membership a survey asking for their opinions and come back to the joint group with a final decision by Easter. Needless to say that hasn't happened yet.

In terms of BAS, David Miller designed a series of questions and a summary of responses indicates

1. Given the declining BAS membership, I accept the need for future planning and change. Agree 97% (28); Disagree 4% (1).
2. In principle, I do not object to the BAS merging with ACE and ABA. Agree 79% (23); Disagree 21% (6).
3. I am unhappy with a merger of the three societies; ACE, ABA and BAS but I would be agreeable to BAS merging with ABA. Agree 28% (8); Disagree 72% (21).
4. There would be no conflict of interest between ABA and BAS in such a move. Agree 93% (27); Disagree 7% (2).
5. Any merger would have to ensure fair representation of former BAS, ABA and ACE members on its Executive body. Agree 93% (28); Disagree 7% (2).
6. BARS must be inclusive and supportive of all aspects of andrological research. Agree 100% (29); Disagree 0% (0)

Other free comments from members included fear that andrology could disappear into embryology and the belief that a dedicated academic andrology society should be maintained and perhaps could be with approached to Pharma. I think we are aware of this possibility but we have tried every other avenue open to us given we are a small society with limited time and resource so the BAS exec committee is in broad agreement that this is the best way forward for the society.

The evening we have a very special event. I hope you all can stay for it.

We are hosting a discussion entitled **ICSI- will there be a future cost for current care.**

We have the BFS Chair elect Dr Jane Stewart as our Chair. Dr Sue Avery (scientist) is highlighting the need and benefits of ICSI in the fertility clinic and Dr Suks Minha (urologist) , who has spoken at BAS meetings in the past focusing on the need to treat the man and his sperm prior to fertility treatment.

In closing, I believe there is still an important role for The British Andrology Society to ensure that whatever outcome we present at next year's AGM safeguards academic and clinical Andrology as a unique speciality.