



Newsletter, Issue No.6, August 2010

Dear BSCC member,

Shockingly, more than a year has passed since the last newsletter. Without wishing to make excuses, several developments have kept Council members extremely busy and at times over-worked during the past 12 months. The ICC conference in Edinburgh, the proposed merger with the NAC, the new BSCC Code of Practice, cytology reconfiguration and a job change for the newsletter editor have all collaborated to eat away at our rapidly vanishing free time. It is almost a luxury to sit at my PC for five minutes and introduce you to the sixth edition of the Society's newsletter. Let us reflect on a hectic year.

Andrew Evered, Newsletter Editor.

Message from the President

The 17th International Congress of Cytology was held at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre from 16 – 20 May 2010. Hosted by the BSCC on behalf of the International Academy of Cytology, the meeting attracted 1200 delegates and 150 accompanying guests from more than 60 countries and all five continents: one of the largest attendances at this triennial international congress in the history of the IAC. Delegates participated in a very busy scientific programme of 8 symposia, 8 satellite symposia, 19 proffered paper sessions, 33 workshops, 3 trade sponsored symposia and 350 posters.

There were 270 delegates from the UK, including many BSCC members who made significant contributions to the scientific programme as invited speakers, workshop presenters, or session chairs, as well as proffered paper and poster presenters. There was also a well attended BSCC satellite symposium on contemporary and emerging issues in cervical cytology.

The practical and virtual microscopy workshops were a particularly popular part of the scientific programme reflecting the cornerstone of our clinical practice. So popular, in fact, that in response to demand, 10 workshops were repeated and 14 expanded to accommodate 40 rather than the originally intended 30 participants.

The scientific programme was supported by an entertaining and enjoyable social programme reflecting aspects of Scottish history and culture under the expert guidance of Dr Euphemia McGoogan.

The congress was well supported by over twenty trade exhibitors with sponsorship packages at all levels. Principal sponsors were Hologic™, mtm, BD, Olympus and Thermo Scientific. Microscopes were provided for the workshops by Leica and Zeiss.

It is likely there will be a modest financial surplus to be distributed equally between the BSCC and the IAC.

Post congress evaluations have generally rated the congress as very good or excellent in all aspects. Members of the Local Organising Committee have also received a number of personal messages of thanks from colleagues in the UK and overseas.

There is no doubt that the global profile of UK cytology and the BSCC has been enhanced by hosting the 17th ICC. However, whilst the excellent reputation of cervical cytology in the UK was confirmed, some of us left Edinburgh with the impression that development work is still needed in non-gynaecological cytology, and in particular in aspects of FNA practice and molecular diagnostics, to match that available in some other developed and developing countries.

Dr J H F Smith, President BSCC
Chair, Local Organising Committee, and Co-chair, Scientific Programme Committee,
17th International Congress of Cytology

BSCC Code of Practice 2010

The BSCC Code of Practice for Laboratories Participating in the NHSCSP was published in January of this year and sits on the homepage of the website. Despite the best intentions of all concerned a few astute members did spot one or two errors and as a result we have made a small number of changes. Since the publication was only published via the website these changes were easily made and the version currently on the website is the up-to-date version.

The major change was to reference the minimum sample number of 35,000 to the SchARR document rather than the Cancer Reform Strategy and add a new link to the original report, which we hope you will also find useful. The second notable change was to sharpen up the guidance for specimen preparation for those of you using SurePath LBC.

It has always been the intention of Council that in an ever-changing cervical screening programme this version of the COP would be constantly reviewed and a sub group will be set up to review the document regularly to see that it remains fit for

purpose. With this in mind we would ask that if you have any issues, or spot any problems with the current version, you either write to or email the Honorary Secretary so that these can be discussed by the sub group.

Members should be mindful that the only “up to date” version of the COP is that which sits on the website – refer to old paper copies at your peril!

Nick Dudding, Vice Chair BSCC

BSCC NAC Merger Update

By now all BSCC members should have received a letter from BSCC Chairman Dr Mina Desai outlining the progress on the proposed merger with the National Association of Cytologists (NAC). An option appraisal presented at the annual general meeting in 2009 has also been circulated. The proposal is the fruit of several meetings and the merger is strongly supported by the BSCC Council and NAC Executive.

Ballot papers will be circulated to BSCC and NAC members in August 2010 with a deadline of 1st September for return of completed ballots. It is vital for the future of cytology in the UK that members complete the ballot papers and return them. A two-thirds majority of votes cast from each membership is required for the merger to go ahead. Therefore all BSCC members are encouraged to complete the ballot paper as soon as it arrives and vote in favour of the merger.

In summary, a merged organisation will offer the following advantages:

- A single, strong voice for cytology in the UK
- Strengthen links with the NHSCSP, RCPATH and Department of Health
- Provide a single annual scientific meeting
- Protection against falling membership rates in both organisations
- *Cytopathology* and *SCAN* for all members

If the merger goes ahead, the role of medical members of council will be protected within the new Council. The NAC Executive has already agreed that the relationship with RCPATH and other professional bodies must be maintained. Wiley-Blackwell (publishers of *Cytopathology*) is also supportive of the merger. One of the main aims of the new Society will be to attract new medical members, in particular junior medical staff and to improve the quality of training in non-gynaecological cytology for medical and non-medical staff.

Please use your ballot paper and vote in favour of the merger. The results of the ballot will be announced at the AGM on 14th September 2010.

Allan Wilson, Honorary Secretary BSCC

Recent News

The BSCC keeps its members up-to-date by posting current events on the News page of the BSCC website <http://www.clinicalcytology.co.uk/news/news.asp>. If you have any news that should be included on the website, please do not hesitate to contact the webmaster andrew.evered@wales.nhs.uk

MORE REFORMS ON THE WAY

The government has published a review of 'Arm's Length Bodies' which proposes some surprisingly extensive reforms, though it is not certain that all will be implemented. Changes of obvious relevance to Fellows of the RCPATH include:

- Abolition of the Human Tissue Authority, with its functions transferred to a variety of other agencies (licensing to be transferred to the Care Quality Commission)
- Abolition of the Health Protection Agency, with transfer of functions to the Secretary of State as part of the new Public Health Service
- Creation of a new 'research regulator' to take over some HTA functions and also the National Research Ethics Service
- The National Clinical Assessment service to become 'self funding' with the expectation that medical revalidation will reduce the demand for its services
- National Confidential Inquiries to be transferred to Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership
- Other functions of the National Patient Safety Agency to be transferred to the (new) National Commissioning Board
- Division of the duties of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority between the Care Quality Commission, a new research regulator and the Health and Social Care Information Centre
- Council for Healthcare and Regulatory Excellence to become self-funding (i.e. paid for in part through GMC subscriptions)
- Health Professions Council to take over functions of General Social Care Council (i.e. social workers)

Details available at

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/DH_117691

NO CHANGE TO CERVICAL SCREENING AGE

A review carried out by the Advisory Committee on Cervical Screening (ACCS) has concluded that there is insufficient evidence to recommend any change to the age range for cervical screening, which will therefore remain at 25-64 for the foreseeable future. This is despite younger starting ages for women in Wales and Scotland. Evidence has showed that earlier screening could do more harm than good, causing too many false positives and an increase in the risk of premature births in some women.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_101427

NEW STUDY CLAIMS BENEFITS OF HPV SELF-TESTING

Home testing kits for detecting HPV could lead to twice as many cases of cervical cancer being diagnosed compared with the regular screening programme.

http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/340/mar11_1/c1040

EXTENDING PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

A new publication from the Department of Health sets out recommendations for a new system of professional regulation in the health care services across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Although it is clear that much work still needs to be done the main conclusions are as follows.

- Statutory regulation for all is not proportionate, necessary or affordable
- Regulation should be proportionate to the risk to patients and the public
- A robust and evidence-based system of risk assessment is required. It is acknowledged that risk must be carefully balanced against the benefits and costs involved when considering any change to the existing system of regulation
- A range of alternative and lighter touch regulatory regimes merit consideration. These include voluntary self regulation, employer-led regulation, a statutory licensing regime, a workforce “passport” regime, or some form of “buyer beware” approach
- A decision-making algorithm should be developed that would support an evidence-based approach to identifying groups for consideration for regulation.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_102824

MODERNISING SCIENTIFIC CAREERS: THE UK WAY FORWARD

This document from the Department of Health informs key stakeholders of the strategy for the development of Healthcare science workforce and their education and training as initially outlined in A High Quality Workforce. It sets out how it is intended to take forward proposals on career pathways, regulation and standards of education and training, education and training programmes and on supporting delivery.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_113275

2010 ADVANCING HEALTHCARE AWARD FOR EAST PENNINE CYTOLOGY TRAINING CENTRE TEAM

Kathryn Hinchliff, Nick Dudding, Keith Faulkner and John Smith representing the NHS Yorkshire & The Humber and the East Pennine Cytology Training Centre have received this prestigious award for achieving excellence in learning, teaching, development or mentorship, supported by GateHouse Training. The team also won the overall award. The judges felt that "This was an ambitious project to raise standards of training in the region, which was regarded as inadequate. They rose to the double challenge of merging the schools and training the workforce in the new technique of liquid-based cytology. The judges felt it showed sound leadership and excellent team working with a keen eye on future changes and developments. With regards the overall award the judges "were taken by surprise by this entry. Training all cytology staff in the revolutionary new way of testing is one major achievement but to have done that at the same time as creating a new centre of excellence is a double achievement. But what impressed the judges most was the obvious leadership and team working, respect for each others strengths and a real vision for the future"

<http://www.chamberlainedunn.com/AHPandHSAwards/AHPandHSAwards2009.htm>

90% OF PATHOLOGISTS FIND RESEARCH RULES TOO COMPLEX

This is just one of the findings of a recent survey investigating why pathology research is on the decline in the UK. 83% respondents said that they would be more active in research if there was an easily accessible source of consolidated guidance endorsed by all regulators. Existing guidance was described by a number of pathologists as "incoherent", "inaccessible" "confusing", "unhelpful" and "a deterrent to research".

<http://www.oncoreuk.org/documents/onCoreUKSurveyReportPressRelease2009-09-07o.pdf>

EUROPEAN CERVICAL CANCER ASSOCIATION PRESS RELEASE

25 European countries & 85% of the population of Europe can now access comprehensive evidence-based information on cervical cancer and its prevention. The European Cervical Cancer Association (ECCA) is an umbrella organisation for more than 100 institutional members including cancer societies, medical associations, research organisations and patient groups that all have an interest in cervical cancer prevention. Its mission is to raise awareness of cervical cancer and

its prevention among the general public, healthcare professionals and public health decision-makers across Europe.

<http://www.ecca.info/index.html>

Kay Ellis, Council Member BSCC

Research and Development

The agenda of the IAC & BSCC meeting in Edinburgh 2010 made clear that molecular studies at both research and development levels in cytology is a particularly active component of both cervical and non-cervical cytology.

HPV analysis and the different methodologies were presented, discussed and even displayed at the trade show. The British Journal of Cancer (2010) 103, 209-212 published in July a HPV prevalence study of women in England with cervical cancer, intraepithelial neoplasia and normal cytology. This comprehensive study concluded that high grade disease in England was predominantly associated with HPV16 and/or 18 and would indicate that the vaccination programme will have a high impact.

In the BMJ July issue an article titled "Smear Fears" (bmj2010; 340:c2830) offers a discussion on the DIY alternative to the smear test. Is it a valuable addition to screening or will it result in unnecessary expense and worry? The test uses tampon to detect mRNA in cervical cells infected with HPV. The results are reported as positive, negative or inconclusive. It costs £115. The article written by Margaret McCartney offers a debate on the test from various professionals on the pros and cons of the test. The last line of the article offers advice to the providers of such a test: "one thing is clear: anyone selling a test about which there are uncertainties should make them extremely clear to purchasers before the test is done".

The DHSSPS in Northern Ireland announced on the 27th July 2010 its intention to raise the screening age to 25 and change the screening intervals to 3 years for the 25 to 49 year olds in line with the screening programme in England. The changes are to come into effect from January 2011.

The J. Clin Pathol (2010;63522-529) published an article on the molecular diagnosis of sentinel lymph node biopsies. The article also provided a cost analysis of the traditional methodology of intra-operative imprints and that of using RT PCR. The method indicated a sensitivity of 95% with a result time of 30-40mins the downside was the cost of the technology.

The August edition of Cytopathology contains several articles looking at possible developments for the cytology laboratory. One (pg 229) was looking at a modified

PAP stain restricting the use of alcohol; another utilising cell blocks for adjuvant testing on breast FNA's. Both papers indicate that research and development in cytology is alive and well.

Jackie Jamison, Council Member BSCC

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Diary dates

14 September 2010, Keele University,
49th BSCC Annual Scientific Meeting

20-24 September 2010, Kimi, Greece
EFCS 3rd Annual Tutorial,

22 September 2010, London
Addressing the quality and productivity challenge,

12-13 November 2010, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
HPV and Cancer BSCC members are offered a preferential registration rate of 425 euros, which is a 30% discount off the onsite registration fee and nearly 15% discount off the current registration fee.

Further details at <http://www.clinicalcytology.co.uk/meetings/meetings.asp>

The editor welcomes any items of interest for inclusion in the newsletter. Please contact andrew.evered@wales.nhs.uk

Best wishes,
Andrew Evered
Newsletter Editor and Webmaster