

**MINUTES – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
ASSOCIATION FOR CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY AND LABORATORY  
MEDICINE – SOUTHERN REGION**

**Friday March 21 2014, 1:30 - 14:15 pm at Harvey Hall, Postgraduate Centre, Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3NG**

There were 32 members present

**1 Apologies for absence**

Derren Ready – Microbiology representative  
Sophie Barnes – Imperial Healthcare  
Gill Rumsby – UCLH  
Laura Tooth – Trainees South Representative  
Maria Firth – FCS representative  
Hannah Fox – Immunology representative  
Jacqui Osypiw – South Tutor  
Rachel Carling – Tutor London  
Sally Benton – Tutor London  
Oliver Clifford Mobley – FCS representative  
Sarah Davie – Tutor London

**2 Minutes of the 2013 AGM held at 13:00 on 28 April at The Royal College of Pathologists, London**

Minutes were accepted.

**3 Matters Arising**

Members agreed to the proposed name change on ‘The Rules of the Southern Region of the Association of Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine’.

This year we have nominated four members for an ACB award and 2 members for regional awards. The committee would be grateful if members could forward their suggestions to the committee for deserving individuals who may have been overlooked.

**4 Report from the Chairman/Council Representative**

In 2013 again the focus for many of us has been Pathology reorganisation. Some large projects have been initiated, some have stalled and others appear to have collapsed. All have involved huge input from ACB members and this remains crucial if we are to have any influence over the way in which our pathology service is delivered. My personal view is that the biochemists at the meetings are pro-active and forward looking but remain passionate about the science and clinical application of the tests we do, since we believe that this translates into better patient care. We are open to change as long as the quality of the service is not compromised. It does take an enormous amount of energy and time but we understand our service better than anyone else.

Amidst very busy schedules and pressure the scientific meetings have provided an opportunity to network and to refresh and again become stimulated by the science behind our jobs.

- The winter meeting was held at the Royal Brompton Hospital and focused on the specialist heart and lung services provided there with talks throughout the day from experts in these fields.
- The spring meeting, incorporating the AGM was held at the Royal College of Pathologists. We were lucky to be able to use this excellent venue without cost, courtesy of the Royal College of Pathologist's as thanks to the ACB for putting money towards their redevelopment campaign a few years ago. Topics included Therapeutic Drug Monitoring and 'Getting out of the Laboratory'.
- The summer meeting 'Personalised medicine' and 'The new NHS' was held at Guy's Hospital in September and received excellent feedback.
- The recent autumn meeting was on a theme of Inherited Metabolic Renal Diseases and included member's papers and case presentations (congratulations to Emma Ashley and Joe Bailey who were awarded the Bill Richmond member's papers awards).

Trainees across the region are progressing well. One of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year trainees has taken up a great opportunity to do a PhD. Several have completed their FRCPATH examinations and others have passed the Part 1. A number have also achieved State registration. The ACB National training course in November was held at Tooley Street hosted by the London Regional Tutors and received excellent feedback. A welcome evening for all Southern Region trainees will be held at the end of January giving an opportunity for trainee to meet the regional tutors and other members of the committee. Most, if not all of the trainees at the end of their third years have managed to secure posts although a number of these are short fixed term contracts. There are similar concerns about job prospects for Microbiology and Immunology trainees in our region.

Now that the regional website is up and running again one of our priorities is to expand the content of this to include access to audit data, presentations from meetings and minutes of committee meetings and make it a useful site for members of our region.

## **5 Appointment of officers**

Members are encouraged to nominate themselves as representatives on the Southern Region Committee. There are a number of vacancies which have been difficult to appoint in the last year. Oliver Clifford-Mobley, Liz Groves, Maria Firth were again voted in by our members as the FCS representatives. It is likely that the Workforce advisor role will be subsumed into the FCS roles.

## **6 Report from the Treasurer**

During the 2013 calendar year, the regional accounts show an increase in final balance to £40,461.05 (up from £35,343.88 in January 2013). This is largely due to a series of well attended meetings, all of which had several sponsors. We received over £6500 in sponsorship

and over £4000 in meeting registration fees. Only one request for conference funding was received in 2013, and this was turned down as the member concerned was not currently working within the profession. A travel bursary has recently been awarded to a Microbiology STP trainee, for attendance at ECCMID 2014 to present research work carried out during her training.

Applications will be considered for conference attendance provided local Trust routes of funding and any individual training budgets have been exhausted, and the applicant is presenting at the conference (either oral or poster presentation). Successful requests are usually capped at £500 per applicant, and further funding would not be provided to the same applicant for several years. Anyone wishing to apply to the region for funding should make contact with the committee via the ACB Office and a form will be provided to complete, prior to discussion at the next Southern Region meeting. We plan to make this form available on the Southern Region website in the near future. It is also worth highlighting that the ACB C.P. Stewart fund also offers travel grants for members to gain experience in a particular technique in another laboratory (UK or abroad).

## 7 Report from the Meetings Secretary

Over the past year we have held 4 Scientific Meetings:

Date	Venue	Organiser	Topic
26/04/13	RCPATH	Zoe Maunsell and Sharon Tyler (Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust )	TDM and Getting out of the Lab
17/09/13	Guy's Hospital	Zehra Arkir and Nick Unsworth	Patient Centred Care
16/12/13	UCLH	Katie Hadfield, Nick Flynn, Sarah Pitkin and Nandini Rao	Inherited Metabolic Renal Disease and Member's papers
29/01/14	RCPATH	Sophie Barnes, David Halsall and Rebecca Leyland	SAS Endocrinology – The everyday, the esoteric and the exciting

In December the Bill Richmond Members Papers prizes were awarded to:  
 Mr Joe Bailey (Bart's Health NHS Trust)  
 Miss Emma Ashley (Kingston Hospital NHS Trust)

All meetings have been well-attended and attracted great feedback from delegates. I would like to thank all the local organisers for their tremendous efforts in co-ordinating such interesting programmes and successful meetings.

Future meetings – dates tbc

Date	Venue	Organiser	Topic
September	University of Westminster	Stephen Reed	Liver and National ACB Medal Awards
December	Imperial College Healthcare Trust	Paul Holloway	Diabetes and Bone Disease

Sponsorship can still be obtained, despite the economic downturn. We have had generous sponsorship, in no particular order, from Abbott, Theradiag, Roche, Biohit, Genzyme, NOVA, Orphanet, Diasorin and IDS.

We are now looking for hosts for 2015 meetings, no prior experience necessary, please contact Rebecca Leyland for further information. We always welcome suggestions for topics for future meetings; again please refer these to Rebecca.

Anne commended Rebecca on her hard work and dedication in her role as meetings secretary.

## **8 Report from the FCS Representatives**

Last year Andrew Taylor took up the role of ACB director of regulatory affairs and chair of the FCS national committee. Consequently he is stepping down as a regional rep for the ACB southern region. We would like to extend our thanks for the hard work he has put in on behalf of the region and also wish him well in the new position. There are two vacancies for southern region FCS reps. Members are also encouraged to ensure that their Trust has FCS representation, and new local reps are welcome.

### National negotiation

**Pay:** The 2014 cost of living pay rise has received widespread media attention. In brief, NHS staff who are at the top point of their pay band will receive 1% increase. All other staff will not receive any cost of living uplift. This has not gone down well with the unions.

**T&Cs:** There is likely to be a cap imposed on redundancy pay (probably at a salary around the top of band 8d) and a reduction in redundancy pay as retirement age approaches, which is seen as uncontroversial. Debate is ongoing about 'claw back' of redundancy pay if individuals start a new job in the NHS within a year of being redundant (currently a 1 month gap is mandatory).

**Pensions:** The new CARE scheme will start on next year. There will be a second 'NHS pensions choice' exercise for those from the first choice exercise who opted to remain in the old scheme. The increases in pension contributions from April 2014 are the final year of the planned increases. However it looks like the target yield of 9.8% of the total pay bill will not be met, therefore further contribution increases post 2015 cannot be ruled out. Under new rules, private companies may have access to the NHS pension scheme for employees engaged in work solely for the NHS. This could be an important factor for recruitment to private pathology providers. Please look out for articles in ACB news about pensions over the coming months, as there is a lot of change afoot, and members may need to take action.

### Members' issues

The FCS has dealt with a number of enquiries during the year and a couple of cases have come out of these. One area in particular where members may be affected is in the new pay progression arrangements. It is up to employers to negotiate how to implement this at a local level, so I emphasise that having FCS representation in your Trust is important.

Restructuring/mergers/joint ventures also continue to grind on around the region. Any 'intelligence' of proposed reorganisations and the like is always gratefully received by the SR committee and FCS.

## **9 Report from Trainee's Committee Representatives**

### **Pre-registration trainees**

The majority of the 2010 intake have passed their ACS assessment and are now registered with the HCPC. These trainees were the first year to undertake the ACS assessment after only 3 years of training. There were no reported issues.

### **Registered trainees and medical trainees**

North Thames: Nothing to report

South Thames: Nothing to report

Outside London: Nothing to report

### **Meetings/conferences**

A large number of trainees attended the first training course held at Tooley Street in November 2013. Both the content and cost of this training course went down well with those who attended. Trainees have also attended Southern Region meetings, Spotlight meetings and FRCPath training days organized by Callum Livingstone.

### **MSc issues**

Manchester: No issues to report. Minor issues with exam questions and weighting have been raised through the course representatives. The 2011 intake have completed their exams (the first year to do so) and now have only their MSc projects to hand in. They will be in Manchester again in April to take part in a mock OSFA to help prepare them for the official OSFAs in the summer.

Nottingham: Nothing to report.

### **Jobs**

South Thames: All 3 of the 2011 intake will be looking for jobs during the next 5 months. Of the 2010 intake 1 trainee left the profession to complete a PhD. 1 secured a six month extension which will be extended and the other secured an 11 month position which became permanent. 1 of the 2008 intake is still in a temporary position and there is a 2009 intake trainee also in a temporary position.

North Thames: Two of the 2010 intake are still on fixed-term contracts, although these have been extended for another year. The other remaining trainee in this intake has secured a permanent senior position at GOSH. The 2009 intake have 6 months left on their contracts and currently none have secured post-training positions.

Outside London: 3 of the 2009 trainees have secured permanent contracts at Kingston Guildford and Epsom, 1 is on maternity leave and will return to a fixed-term contract at King's. The 2010 intake are coming to the end of their 4 year training contracts and will be searching for jobs along with the third year STP trainees.

### **Other**

The FRCPath tutorials are continuing once a month and many trainees are looking to sit the exam in March/Sept. There are also monthly FRCPath revision sessions organized by GSTS which go through SAQs and OSPE questions.

The trainees welcome evening went ahead at the end of January. The evening received good feedback and was well attended by tutors and London Biochemistry trainees, however there was poor attendance from Outer-London trainees and from trainees in Immunology and

Microbiology disciplines. Previous years have seen good attendance from these groups so we are unsure why this year might have been different.

There is a possibility of the region securing HSST positions to allow current trainees to work towards full FRCPATH in a training position with protected time for studying. The funding and location of these positions is yet to be decided.

It has been difficult in recent years to get pre-registration trainees in microbiology and immunology in the Southern Region to engage with the trainee reps and the ACB in general, as such it is difficult to keep track of the number of pre-registration trainees in these disciplines.

## **10 Report from Tutors Modernising Scientific Careers**

Short listing for the 2014 STP trainees recently took place. The interviews will be taking place at the end of March. There will be 4 trainees for London, based at UCL, CHX, KCH and SGH.

### **Regional Tutors/ Education Committee**

There was a Regional Tutors meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

Highlights: HSST training posts, KCH and SHG have applied for one of these posts. The Objective Final Structured Assessments (OFSA) are being planned for the final year STP trainees. The next ACB training course held in Wales is the last of its type planned. Discussions of possible 1 day training courses are being proposed.

### **ACB training Course Nov 2013**

The London Region hosted the ACB training course on November 11-12<sup>th</sup>. The programme was jointly put together, and was chaired by the 3 regional tutors in London. The scientific programme had excellent feedback.

### **London Regional Tutor Change**

Sally Benton will be stepping down from her regional tutor role as she will be taking up a new position outside of London. We will need to find a replacement as from May 2014.

### **Summary from the SE tutor**

- All year 4 Grade A trainees have successfully received their ACB certificate of completion
- Most trainees are progressing as expected. Oxford STP year 3 resigned at end of 2013.
- STP trainees & supervisors feel it is demanding to complete the competencies in the time available and there is still some about the level of experience/evidence for completing competencies.
- Concern continues about the Nottingham MSc course which is attended by the Brighton STP trainee.
- Concerns continue about job prospects as although all the 2009/10 intake are currently in posts, some of these are fixed term contracts

- Training day for assessors has taken place last week for Objective Final Structured Assessments (OFSA) which are being planned for the year 3 STP trainees. Mock examinations are due in April.

## **11 Report from Workforce Advisors**

None

## **12 Report from the Microbiology Representative Representation**

The members of the microbiology ACB committee have continued to integrate & contribute to the ACB committees (Council, Education, Trainees, Workforce, Scientific, publications & website).

### **Training and meetings**

We have organized training day for our pre-registration & post-registration trainees which had very positive feedback. We had a vaccine focused spotlight meeting and we are involved in the EuroLabFocus 2014 Meeting.

A group of microbiologists have started writing the STP infection Science OSFA questions and scenarios and will be running a mock exam this spring.

### **FRCPATH Part II**

One Southern microbiology trainee has successfully completed, and passed the FRCPATH part II examination. Many congratulations to Kerry Williams.

Overall it has been a successful year for the microbiology profession

## **13 Report from the Immunology Representative Immunology in 2013 and beyond**

2013 has proved to be a successful year for Immunology members within the southern region and nationally; with all remaining clinical scientist trainees within Immunology, successfully passing their third year exit vivas and thereby gaining their Certificate of Competency. In addition, preparations are well underway for the provision of the Immunology content of the Objective Structured Final Assessments (OSFA) for the first round of STP trainees, with many southern region Immunology members involved in this process.

Several Immunology articles have now appeared within the ACB news, with many southern region members contributing to their content. It is hoped that this will continue into 2014, with the addition of further Immunology journal articles appearing within the Annals of Clinical Biochemistry.

Immunology southern region members have also experienced success in the acquisition of additional funding for research and development; a particular example being the awarding of a CSO NIHR Healthcare Science grant to an Immunology Clinical Scientist from Oxford. It is hoped that other scientists within the region will also submit successful applications in the future.

There have been initial discussions with both the Microbiology Representative and Meetings Secretary, with regard to increasing the Immunology and Microbiology content of the Southern Region's educational programme. It has been agreed that a joint Immunology and Microbiology meeting, in addition to the pre-established Biochemistry meetings would be feasible, and is the most amenable initial means of introducing these modalities into the region's meeting programme. This is therefore to be discussed further, with the aim of such a meeting to occur November/December of 2014.

#### **14 Report from the Southern Region Webmaster**

The new ABC website has been launched and the regional websites are now available to be managed and edited by the ACB webmaster at the direction of the current regional webmasters. As SR webmaster I am currently collating the information that was previously held on the website. This is to be submitted in due course to the ACB to be uploaded in the near future. This again will contain much of the previously held material on the website, including meetings, audit data from the Thames audit group, bursary information, as well as planned social events and photographs.

If anyone has any specific requests on what they would like to appear on the site, please don't hesitate to contact me directly ([alan.courtney@imperial.nhs.uk](mailto:alan.courtney@imperial.nhs.uk)).

#### **15 AOB**

The meeting started at 13:55 and finished at 14:15.