



Vascular Anaesthesia Society Newsletter

The fifth edition of the newsletter aims to keep you informed of events and new developments within the society.

Report of the VASGBI Annual Scientific Meeting

University of East Anglia, Norwich, 8-9th
September 2008.

The 12th Annual Scientific Meeting was organised and hosted by David Nunn in Norwich, at the University of East Anglia. In true tradition the VASGBI committee again chose a location to ensure that members are "au fait" with all corners of the British Isles! After recovering from their jet lag delegates were in for a real treat with an exciting and stimulating scientific programme. Experts were drawn together from anaesthesia, cardiology, vascular surgery and interventional radiology to complete the scientific programme.

The meeting commenced earlier than ever before with a 9.00 am start on the Monday. A new angle was tried this year with 2 workshops to kick off the meeting. Mike Swart and Chris Snowden held a cardiopulmonary exercise testing session, with Mome Wolmarans hosting a workshop for ultrasound use in regional anaesthesia. Both workshops were hosted twice and had excellent attendance (places were limited to 30 per workshop). Delegates not attending workshops were allowed the customary first morning 'lie-

in", with session 1 of the meeting commencing at 11.30 am.



Campus at University of East Anglia

The first session was entitled "Clinical scenarios – how to do it". After a warm welcome and the usual housekeeping announcements from David Nunn, Mike Swart was first on the podium to commence the science. He gave a succinct and case orientated presentation about management of the intraoperative myocardial infarction. Fortunately Trevor Wistow, a cardiologist, was next to present and was able to help Mike out with difficult questions! Dr Wistow, a local physician, gave a very practical talk about the management of atrial fibrillation post-operatively. Delegates were informed it is time to look beyond digoxin, with beta blockers now first choice agents for most scenarios. Following on, Graeme McCleod (Dundee) had the unenviable task of letting the audience into the secret of how to make thoracic epidurals work. Dr McCleod utilised an alternative approach during his presentation, concentrating on mathematical modelling of patient and operative variables to achieve success. In summary it appears if you have an ASA 1-2, 60-70 year old male patient, undergoing vascular surgery with an epidural cited at T10, then it will definitely work - all others are in the lap of the gods! This presentation certainly raised many interesting questions at the end. The session was concluded by Peter Bradley, a Cambridge anaesthetist, giving us a

physiological based approach to the management of aortic cross clamping.



Mike Swarts' response to a difficult question during the CPX workshop

Session 2 opened with the first of our invited overseas speakers, Professor Mike James from Cape Town. His talk entitled "what's new in perioperative fluid management" was delivered at whirlwind pace but with several clear take home messages. He also extolled the virtues of flow-directed cardiac output monitoring to guide fluid management in high risk surgical patients. Following on Sue Mallett gave an overview of technologies available for "near patient testing of haemostasis". This talk, delivered at a slightly more relaxed pace, had several areas of interest including setting up your own near-patient testing laboratory in the operating theatre setting. It was clear that such a "luxury" set-up had several benefits when major surgery is undertaken. I'm afraid the rest of us mere mortals will probably have to continue sending samples to the laboratory and waiting several hours for the results!

Session 3 provided a slightly more light-hearted feel to the day. The societies' first sponsored overseas delegate, Dr Biswas Pradhan, gave an interesting 10 minute overview of vascular anaesthesia in Nepal. This included several gruesome photographs of Nepalese patients presenting for surgery. Following on was the debate "this house believes that vascular surgeons will be extinct within 10 years". John Cockburn, an Interventional radiologist from Norwich, was first up in

support of the motion. The main thrust of his argument initially centred around comparing vascular surgeons, and their techniques, to Cro-Magnon man. He followed this up by pushing the boundaries of sexism and political correctness which were enthusiastically received by delegates. In summary he concluded that vascular surgeons were in "an evolutionary cul-de-sac!" Jim Clarke, a vascular surgeon from Norwich, was clearly not fazed by such jibes. He donned his surgical "white coat" and with articulate elegance opposed the motion. He again resorted to a historical approach to extol the virtues of surgery over the years, and as to why vascular surgeons would still be with us in the future. His Cro-Magnon retort was to refer Interventional Radiologists as "kids with new toys" and he suggested that they were never around when you actually need them. The pre-debate votes were 16 for the motion and 109 against. The post debate count showed that John Cockburn had made little impact, with a further 20 people voting against him: votes for 16, votes against 129! Jim Clarke had won the day!!



Jim Clarke sways the crowd during the debate with his dress sense

The day was rounded up with the usual 10 suspects present at the AGM. Business was concluded succinctly to enable all to get to the bar and enjoy the evening's entertainment.

The Conference dinner was held at 19.30 to round up the day. Following a 30 minute walk where delegates struggled to find the venue, we were treated to an excellent

evening of food, wine and entertainment. The string-quartet serenaded delegates during dinner and was complemented by a table magician. Some ventured off into town to find nightclubs, but the majority appeared to filter back to their rooms by 01.00 am.



Mike James – one of our eminent overseas speakers

Day 2 opened with the free paper session. Delegates were not deterred by the festivities of the night before and turned up in strength to support the first session. The number of abstracts submitted exceeded last year's high, with 20 posters and 5 free papers accepted for presentation. Committee and sub-committee members were on hand to ensure fair judging. For the second year running the judges were unable to decide on a clear winner, demonstrating the high quality of the free paper presentations. Prizes of £100 were awarded to: Dr R Sinclair (Middlesbrough) and Dr M Simpson (Leeds) from the free paper section and Dr NP Wilson for first prize in the poster section. The session was concluded by Professor Nigel Webster (Aberdeen) who gave a very interesting account of bio-markers and their interpretation perioperatively. He also enlightened the audience as to use of bio-markers in the wider medical arena.

The final session of the meeting focussed on perioperative risk in vascular surgery. Mr Matthew Armon, a vascular surgeon from Norwich opened the session with a talk entitled "Should surgeons publish their results". He tackled a thorny issue very well, concluding that surgeons have a

professional duty to publish their results in an accurate and understandable way. David Prytherch (Portsmouth) followed with an interesting talk on "risk prediction" covering several areas including risk prediction tools currently available and their limitations. The final talk of the meeting was given by our second invited overseas speaker, Professor Don Poldermans (Rotterdam), who was lecturing at the ASM for the second time. His talk "reducing risks and medical interventions" provided an excellent overview of preoperative risk reduction strategies. Of major interest to all delegates was his dissection of the recently published POISE trial. This provided a clear take home message that we should continue to beta block selected high risk individuals prior to high risk surgery, but at an appropriate dose and time interval in advance.

Dr Jonathan Thompson closed the meeting and thanked delegates and speakers for attending. Jane Heppenstall was awarded her usual "huge" bouquet of flowers for her excellent organisational work. David Nunn was also thanked for his hard work in arranging an excellent meeting. Delegates were informed that the 2009 meeting was to be held in Kinsale, Ireland, on September 17-18th (see later).



Don Poldermans dispels the myths around the POISE study

Remember that free paper abstracts will be published in Anaesthesia and the society encourages delegates to consider submission for next year's meeting. The general standard, and number, is

increasing every year making for a more competitive field. This is good news for all and shows that the VASGBI is held in increasingly high regard nationally.

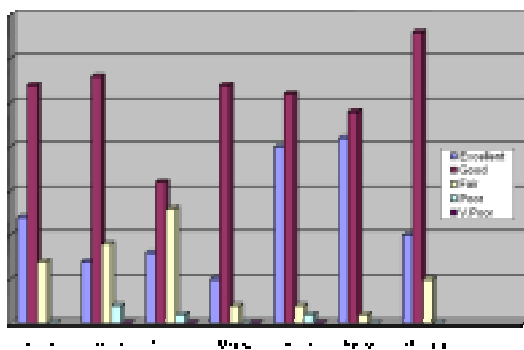


Our Chairman is somewhat taken aback by Rhona Sinclair's delight at receiving her free paper prize!

Feedback from the 2008 ASM

Thanks to delegates who took the time to complete feedback forms for the 2008 ASM. General organisational feedback is summarised below (magnifying glass provided!). As in recent years, feedback on the scientific content of the meeting was excellent.

Fig 1 – Feedback on general organisational aspects of meeting



Most specific comments from delegates centred around the venue and the food. The food was found to be of a very high standard especially at the conference dinner. The campus venue proved to be a hot topic with many delegates unhappy

with the size of the area to navigate round and the poor signing. The workshops introduced this year proved very popular with several requests to make them an ongoing feature with more places available.

All feedback was discussed at the November committee meeting and constructive suggestions actively considered. We have all ready incorporated some of the suggestions into the programme for the 2009 ASM.

Elections and Committee Matters

The main VASGBI Committee comprises VASGBI members who are elected for a term of 3 years, which can be extended for a further 3 years if they are re-elected. In addition the chairs of the education, research and audit sub-committees and the local organiser for the forthcoming Annual Scientific meeting are co-opted onto the main committee. The Officers (Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer) are elected from the main committee, and serve for 3 years in addition to their term on the committee.

Chairman (Jonathan Thompson) and Hon Secretary (Gerry Danjoux) are both into their 2nd year of office. Next year will see 3 committee vacancies with Mike Swart, Andy Lumb and Treasurer Jeremy Langton all up for re-election. Committee positions are open to all society members. Interested parties need to be proposed and seconded, by society members, and include a 200 word resume of relevant past achievements. The application form for this process is included with the newsletter, and nominations need to be received by 28th February 2009.

Sub-committee Reports

Research Committee

The research sub-committee offers a peer review process, for appropriate studies, to

have protocols reviewed prior to submission for ethics approval. Anyone wishing to enquire about this opportunity further should contact chairman of the research sub-committee, Chris Snowden by e-mail: Chris.Snowden@nuth.nhs.uk

The research committee awarded a grant of £9,984 to Dr Catherine Farrow from Leeds for a study titled "Does preoperative exercise capacity have an impact on post-operative quality of life for patients who undergo aortic surgery?" Grants are available from the VASGBI to cover all or part of the costs of research projects in the field of vascular anaesthesia, up to a limit of £10,000. Grants are awarded in open competition across Great Britain and Ireland after high quality peer review. The research funded will have clear benefit to the NHS and take into account DOH and NHS priorities. Owing to the limited funds available, we are not usually able to fund salaries, although each individual application will be considered on its own merits. The closing date for applications is 3rd April 2009.

Further information and details of how to apply will soon be on the VASGBI website. Please address all queries and completed application forms for Research Grants to: Dr Mike Swart, Department of Anaesthetics, Torbay Hospital, Torquay, TQ2 7AA email: michael.swart@nhs.net or Tel: 01803 655196.

Mike Swart & Chris Snowden – Research committee

Education Committee

Presenting abstracts to the ASM continues to be an increasingly popular pastime, and this year we received a record-breaking 28 abstracts. Sadly, the limited time for verbal presentations and space constraints for poster presentations meant we were unable to accept all the submissions. All the abstracts were reviewed by members of the education and research committees, and 25 authors invited to the meeting to present their work in either poster or

verbal format. The resulting impressive poster exhibition generated much interest from delegates and was judged by two teams of VASGBI committee members who once again selflessly sacrificed their lunch to perform this duty. The number and standard of abstracts continues to increase and I am grateful to the trainees and their supervisors for their continued interest in the VASGBI. Prize winners are outlined above.

The education committee arranged a joint meeting between the VASGBI and the Anaesthetic Section of the Royal Society of Medicine entitled "Pre-operative assessment – the key to success!" which took place in March 2008. This one-day meeting of workshops and lectures attracted almost 100 delegates from around the country, who were rewarded with several 'state-of-the-art' presentations from a range of national speakers. This was the first significant educational collaboration between the VASGBI and another specialist society, a strategy we hope to repeat with other societies in the future.

Andy Lumb – Education committee

Audit Committee

As many of you will know we have been working with the Vascular Society (VS) to integrate anaesthetic datasets into the four indexed procedures in the National vascular Database. This will be a web based data collection system and it will be coming on line in the next few months. Our aim is to collect both activity data and also data which may help with the risk stratification of patients in the future. The datasets we will aim to collect are now largely complete. We will keep you updated of progress but it may well be that you are asked to submit data by your surgical colleagues before we have enrolled you into the system. We will aim to write to you all with details of how to register before this happens.

On the wider front Vascunet has recently published Europe wide data collected by

Vascular Surgeons. This has identified that patient outcome from British patients undergoing open abdominal aneurysm repair appears to be approximately twice that in other European countries. There may be many reasons for this. As a consequence of this the VASGBI has been asked by the VS to help look at the surgical pathway for these patients in the UK. One of the things the VASGBI would like to do is collect some data on anaesthetic service provision. You will find an audit form from us with the newsletter. We would be grateful if you would complete it and return it in the SAE provided. This data will be confidential and will be presented at the next VASGBI meeting.

Over the next few weeks those of you who enrolled to take part in the coronary stent audit, presented by Simon Howell at the last VASGBI meeting, will receive information about the dataset and the period over which the study will be conducted. If there is anyone else who wants to help participate in this audit please email me (Martin.Price@phnt.swest.nhs.uk) and I will be happy to send you information.

Last but not least we will soon be sending you all an audit kit marked by the Society looking at current practice for EVAR. We would be grateful if as many of you as possible return these forms and thank you in advance for your co-operation. I would like to remind you that this facility is open to any member who has an audit related to vascular anaesthesia. Details on how to apply can be found on the website.

Martin Price – Audit committee

ACCEA Committee

As reported previously, the VASGBI can support members applying for clinical excellence awards. In practice this means that members who are themselves applying for higher national awards may be supported by the VASGBI. The influence of specialist societies in this process is likely to be relatively small in

comparison with other supporting bodies (e.g. your Trust, the RCA or AAGBI) but we may be able to emphasise aspects of your ACCEA application which are not highlighted elsewhere. Although the process is different we have also supported members applying for awards under the Scottish system. It is pleasing to report that on every occasion since 2006 (when the process commenced) at least one anaesthetist supported by the VASGBI has been successful at national level. At the time of writing, the sieving committee has considered the 2009 applications and citations are being submitted. The process will be repeated in autumn 2009 for the 2010 round so be ready to submit your form to the Hon Secretary if you wish to be considered for VASGBI support.

Jonathan Thompson – ACCEA committee

Treasurer's report

The financial situation of the Vascular Anaesthesia Society of Great Britain & Ireland remains healthy. The majority of the yearly financial activity is associated with the annual meeting, so this is now starting to settle down. We are in addition every year able to support research and travel grants.

In the forthcoming year I am working with our bank and hope to be able to offer an on-line payment facility through the VASGBI website. This will be for payments associated with the annual meeting. This will hopefully be more convenient for members and will also considerably reduce the administrative burden for Jane in the VASGBI office. I will keep you posted about this development and full details will appear on the website when this facility is available.

Jeremy Langton, VASGBI Treasurer

Website

Our thanks go to David Nunn who continues to work hard, on behalf of the society, maintaining the website (www.vasgbi.com). On-line registration via

the website was very successful for the 2008 meeting. All the latest VASGBI information can be accessed via the website, including details of grants available and closing dates. The forum is also a great facility to augment members' discussion and stimulate debate.

Travel Grants

Travel grants are available annually through the society up to £1000. Only 2 grants have been allocated over the last 4 years showing that this available resource is underutilised by members. This year the society provided an "inverse" travel grant to Dr Bishwas Pradhan to come to the ASM from Nepal. We are keen to continue to foster such links with other overseas institutions. Any member with an overseas contact who wishes to be considered for such sponsorship should contact Gerry Danjoux (Hon Secretary) for further information.

People wishing to apply for a grant must be VASGBI members and travelling to visit or work in a centre of excellence for vascular anaesthesia. The only thing we ask in return is for a short presentation at the ASM to recount the educational benefit of the visit for the individual or their hospital.

Future Meetings

Next year the ASM is to be held in Kinsale, Ireland. There is to be a break from tradition with the meeting being held from September 17-18th which is a Thursday and Friday. This will provide delegates with an excellent opportunity to travel with partners and sample the delights of the area over a weekend or longer! There is also to be a departure from the usual style of venue with the meeting being based in the conference facility of the Actons hotel. The local organisers for the meeting are Anthony Cunningham, Declan O'Brien and Deirdre McCoy.

Flights are available from most UK airports to reach Cork, the nearest airport. Following the committee meeting in November an exciting programme is planned and we are sure the meeting will be well attended by delegates. The conference hotel has a limited number of rooms which will be available on a first come first serve basis at a fixed delegate rate. Details of other accommodation and Kinsale itself can be found at www.kinsale.ie. The society website www.vasgbi.com will also provide detailed information in the near future.

We are working towards electronic registration and payment for the 2009 meeting. This work is in progress; please keep an eye on the website for updates.

London is being lined up as a venue for the 2010 ASM with a European meeting also being considered in the near future.

Other News

The Society has also been active in a few other areas:

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) – we have applied for inclusion as a partner organization in the NIHR clinical research network. This is an exciting development as eligibility means that studies supported by VASGBI grants will also be eligible for NHS service support and other infrastructure assistance through the UK Clinical Research networks. Whilst this system and terminology may be unfamiliar to many practising anaesthetists, funding for research in the NHS is changing and Partner Organisation status is an important consideration in the funding of clinical research in the future. More information will be available in due course.

The European Society for Vascular Surgery have recently produced their second Vascunet report in attempt to compare vascular surgical practice across

several comparable European countries. This has suggested that mortality for open AAA repair in the UK is roughly double that in Europe. Clearly this is cause for concern and the VASGBI has been consulted by the Vascular Society for its views on this and the recommended dataset for inclusion in the Vascular Database. A small working group has been set to consider these matters and further details will be available in due course.

NHS specialist vascular library – we have representation on the advisory committee to the NHS Specialist Vascular Library. This is a Department of Health supported venture which aims to provide a source of up-to-date information on many aspects of vascular disease, and complements the portfolio of NHS Specialist Libraries. The website has just been launched and its address is www.library.nhs.uk/Vascular/. If any member wishes to contribute to this venture, please contact the VASGBI Chairman Jonathan Thompson (jt23@le.ac.uk).

Dates for your diary

Closing dates:
Research grants – 3rd April 2009.
Travel grants – 31st May 2009
Abstracts for ASM – 30th June 2009
Committee elections – end February 2009

Annual Scientific meeting:
September 17-18th 2009

Many thanks to all contributors to the newsletter and to society members for reading it each year religiously!!

Regards to all members – wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Gerry Danjoux – VASGBI Hon Secretary

Final Rogues gallery from 2008 ASM



Poster judging can be hard work as Chris and Mike will testify



Gerry Danjoux and Jonathan Thompson with the rest of the committee in the background!

