

BSPOGA NEWSLETTER

Dear Members

This year your Executive Council has resolved to establish a newsletter for communication in BSPOGA. Some have said this is ambitious, but we hope that there will be a mailing twice or 3 times a year with a newsletter in some form to go with it. My personal view as secretary (newly volunteered!!) is that it should be dynamic (of course!!) but what I mean is that it should not only be a report from the Executive Council to you but could and should be used for comments by the membership. I would see these as a debate (rather than a tool to criticise what are effectively voluntary workers on our behalf) to continue to define and refine the needs, wants and aspirations of the organisation.

Speaking as a member I think BSPOGA is both important and unique. It is important to me as a multidisciplinary organisation. As a doctor it informs me of issues related to the problems about which my patients consult me that might not be immediately apparent. It helps with what range of care I should be providing and thus is not as narrow as traditional medical teaching. It provides me with contacts to consult and also reaffirm that my experience of the commonly multifactorial nature of patient problems occurs for others too. It covers ground I have not and will not be taught. I enjoy conferences with speakers on varied topics and from many disciplines. One of the comments from the last conference was that it was a bit medical. Was this in format or speakers? What would other members see as helpful? I know our membership secretary David Hampson circulated questionnaires at the conference to ascertain views please also be happy to email me personally or for the newsletter if you have any views general or specific.

I am of course concerned (and angry) that the psychological emotional components of problems are often ignored;/overlooked. As they can be present in 10-50% of gynaecological presentations to hospital outpatients this is a significant amount of morbidity. Is this as much due to the system – no teaching, “expensive to do”, “time consuming” to do, no extra “brownie points” for doing it, no way of counting it and therefore remunerating it (as yet not devised because not considered important) as to the defences of the individuals who can find this aspect of care personally challenging? As Clinicians mature, the experience they gain often helps them to take these factors into consideration – but why wait when information and training should be available? The lack of clinical psychologists is also a chicken and egg situation. The lack of understanding of what “counsellors” or therapists are and standardisation or understanding of the differences of the disciplines within that, also contribute to the inertia preventing improvement and changes. As times become more enlightened I hope that more holistic care can be given and the benefits of the appropriateness of this becomes seen and accepted by patient, doctor and system. Thus we can formally organise and pay for it. This is why I think BSPOGA is vital, demonstrating the importance of this aspect of O & G and continuing to act as a focus for the future. Well that’s me on my soapbox for the year!!

I am committed to a dialogue and so would be happy to hear from others as to their hopes expectations and experiences. Perhaps learning about the members should be a conference agenda item??

Regards from Secretary
Jayne Cockburn

WEBSITE UPDATE

Work towards updating and modernising the BSPOGA website was agreed at the last Executive Council meeting. Currently membership data will not be put on the website partly because there were concerns about members privacy and access to the web and also because we need to clarify our needs to register under the Data Protection Act. Thanks to Ian Allen and Kevan Wylie for continuing to pursue this.

The website is accessible at www.bs-poga.org in its current format but will be in a new format at the same address in the near future.

ISPOG CONGRESS 2004 UPDATE Edinburgh May 16 – 19 2004

The preparations for the ISPOG Congress 2004 continue apace. It is really getting quite exciting. Mike Pawson has nearly completed the ISPOG programme. The call for papers and draft programme will go out quite soon.

The programme includes five plenary speakers, over 30 symposia, Themed paper sessions. Free Communications and poster sessions. Additional workshops may be arranged. The social programme will include an opening reception at the Edinburgh Conference Centre, a reception at Edinburgh Castle and a Conference Banquet in the Assembly Rooms.

The Congress has now been established as a limited company with charitable status and the congress website, www.ispog2004.org, will be open in the near future. The Local Organising Committee are still trying to raise sponsorship and ask all members to let Ian Allen know of any possible sponsors or suggestions to follow up.

JOURNALS AT REDUCED RATES FOR BSPOGA MEMBERS

Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology: This is the official journal of ISPOG and is published quarterly. BSPOGA members can subscribe at the rate of £40 instead of the normal individual rate of £90. A subscription form was circulated with Beth Alder's last letter but can be arranged by writing to:

The Parthenon Publishing Group
Richmond House
White Cross
South Road
Lancaster LA1 4XF

Sexual and Relationship Therapy: This is the official journal of the British Association for Sexual and Relationship Therapy and is also published quarterly. BSPOGA members can subscribe at the rate of £35 instead of the normal individual rate of £136. A subscription form was circulated with Beth Alder's last letter but can be arranged by writing to the following address, quoting reference **CSMT-BSPOGA**:

Louise Porter
Taylor & Francis Ltd
4 Park Square
Milton Park
Abingdon OX14 4RN

PUBLICATIONS

We would like members to inform us of any publications they have had over the preceding months so we can highlight them and bring them to the attention of the membership, and to show the activity going on in the psychosomatic field.

SECRETARIAL CONTACT

There has been a change in the way we will use secretarial help. Up to now there has been use and abuse of officers' private/NHS/work secretary, with some small payments to them at conference time. It was decided to put this on a more professional footing and so the secretarial group, which runs many private practices in my hospital, organised by Rosalie Stephens, has been asked to perform this function. The advantage of having a group is that the work which is variable in amount can be accommodated more easily than by just one person. To keep the personal touch, we have one nominated secretary Hazel Jones. She can be contacted on hazel.jones@ntlworld.com or via the group office. If you need to contact them details are: Address Hazel Jones, C/o Rosalie Stephens Office at Frimley Park Hospital, Portsmouth Road, Frimley, Surrey. GU16 5UJ Telephone 01276 604846 fax 01276 526299 Email rosaliestephens@compuserve.com

CONFERENCE REPORT

BSPOGA Spring Conference, held jointly with the RCOG
Tuesday 11 March 2003. This was the second joint BSPOGA/RCOG meeting.

There was a busy programme with eight international speakers. The morning started with a thoughtful and emotional presentation by Prof Lesley Regan who described her work in recurrent miscarriage. My later morning favourites were our Chair talking about the development of SIGN guidelines for the management of postnatal depression. I was impressed by the amount of work the team had put into the guidelines. It was also useful to refresh memory on the evidence and I know I shall be reviewing my local guidelines using the SIGN guidelines as a Gold standard. (Yes my local PCT does have them – does yours?) You can get them off the net on (www.sign.ac.uk).

My favourite of all was the ground-breaking discussion by Ms Sarah Creighton on the changing management of children with Intersex, made particularly topical by the TV programme Footballers Wives. Updates on Viagra, designer vaginas and how women see themselves were useful reviews for the jobbing Gynaecologist. It was also interesting to hear about the ethical world of infertility and its perversion by Government league tables by Mr S Abdalla.

I also found it helpful to listen to the problems of adolescents by Professor Garden, as I also see a fair number of adolescent patients and so her problems with patients, and how they see themselves was illuminating, particularly as this area is poorly covered in training. Other lectures on body image in women with polycystic ovaries by Mr Balen and fetal anomaly scanning by Prof Nicolaidis completed the wide range of topics covered in this day.

Prof Nicolaidis unintentionally gave great support for recognition of the psychological work performed in the Antenatal Clinic. He argued strongly for appropriate ultrasound intervention – much more than is currently provided in most clinics – so there were no dead babies and so counselling would not be needed. He felt that much of antenatal

care was ritual and not helpful to recognising organic pathology, and therefore was care without a point. I personally feel this is support for recognising that some antenatal visits, (most often, but not solely by midwives) are as much for social and psychological support rather than "futile" measurement of blood pressure. If these aspects of care were better recognised they could arguably be provided more effectively and proper scientific evaluation could begin.

So that's one example of the thoughts that the conference provoked. So what did I learn? Sometimes medicine can be emotionally draining and many of us are unclear as to how best to support ourselves even if we do work to support others of the team. Secondly teams are often very important. Thirdly, that all individuals regardless of anatomy have their own sexuality and feelings, and we (doctors/health care professionals/society) need to be increasingly careful about thinking that we know best and assigning people artificially to genders. My last lesson was that you have to be careful who the Viagra is for – the wife or the mistress, and that it can upset the balance in what was ostensibly a good working relationship.

If anyone wants copies of the five abstracts printed in the programme, please apply to the BSPOGA secretary via hazel.jones@ntlworld.com and we will mail the copies to you.

DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS

The Directory of Members is now out of date and we are hoping to produce a new version. Will all members please check their details in the current version and send any corrections. The enclosed membership questionnaire can be used for this purpose. If we do not receive a reply, we will use the existing information. Anyone who does not want their data included should write to Dr Ian C Allen. Send all completed forms to:

Dr Ian C Allen
11 Haghalm Road
Cleghorn
Lanark ML11 7SG

EVENTS COMING UP:

8th Annual BSPOGA Conference Friday 19 September 2003

This will be held in the Robens Suite, Guy's Hospital, a new venue for us. Topics will include: What is behind women's request for Caesarean section implementing a perinatal mental health service, psychosexual counselling and gamete donation. Distress in gynaecological outpatients.

Application form has already been distributed, BSPOGA members have a reduced rate. Bring a friend for what should be a good day in one of the loveliest locations in London, with good views over the London Eye.

NIXON FORUM

Balint style group training taster day (for doctors only) to introduce a training in psychological and emotional aspects of O & G – October 2003.

NIXON FORUM

Training day. Balint style group training module on puberty and psychosexual development. In conjunction with the Royal College of Psychiatrists. For more details

contact Frank Johnson, Frodwich House, Hepscott, Morpeth, Northumberland. NE61 6LN
01670 515119 or Jayne Cockburn Email jecockburn@ntlworld.com

ISPOG CONFERENCE Edinburgh 16 -19 May 2004 www.ispog2004.org

BSPOGA Executive Committee Members

Hon President:	Professor Norman Morris
Chairman (2001-2003)	Professor Beth Alder
Chairman (2003-2005)	Dr Ian C Allen
Past Chairman:	Professor John Studd
Executive Treasurer:	Dr Ian Allen
Secretary General:	Ms Jayne Cockburn
Membership Secretary:	Mr David Hampson
Council Members:	Ms Gilly Andrews
	Dr Cathy Coulson
	Dr Myra Hunter
	Dr Martin Lupton
	Ms Arlene Raeburn
	Ms Judith Rosen
	Dr Kevan Wylie

Co-opted Members	Mr Mike Pawson
	Mr Vic Robinson

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at 13.30 on Friday 19 September 2003 during the Annual Conference. The timing is a change, in the hope that more members will attend and participate in the management of BSPOGA. Nominations are required for the post of Chair Elect (2005 – 2007) and 4 Council Members. Jayne Cockburn, Myra Hunter and Martin Lupton all retire at the end of two years on the Council but are eligible for re-election. David Hampson has completed two years. The Executive Council are looking for someone to take over the post of Executive Treasurer, as Ian Allen becomes Chair.

All nominations must be in the hands of the Secretary General by 5 September.