

## **ACB Scottish Region, Annual Reports, 2004**

### **Chairman**

Our first meeting of the year was the AGM that was held in the magnificent King's College Conference Centre in Aberdeen on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2003. The John King Award was presented to Dr. Kevin Deans, an SHO from the Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow, for his paper entitled "Continuous Blood Glucose monitoring in Diabetes," which he presented in Dumfries the previous June. The John King Award consists of a chess-piece trophy plus a grant of £200 towards attendance at a scientific meeting. It is presented in memory of Dr. John (Ian) King who was a clinical biochemist in Glasgow Royal Infirmary between 1969 and 1978. It was inaugurated in 1980 for the best presentation by a young biochemist at a regional meeting. Following the AGM the scientific meeting consisted of an interesting series of presentations on diverse topics such as ethics, data protection, quality management, and audit.

Our summer meeting was held in Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow, on 17<sup>th</sup> June. A series of 9 members' papers were presented, including case reports with medicolegal implications, clinical genetics, and audit. Those papers that were presented by trainees were judged for the next John King Award, which will be presented at this year's AGM on Loch Lomond-side in March.

Our autumn meeting was held in the Chancellor's Building of the new Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on 6<sup>th</sup> November. Members had a chance to tour parts of the PFI-built hospital, including the A&E department and the multidisciplinary laboratory. The scientific meeting included four papers on the subject of drugs and toxicology, a presentation from a consultant diabetologist on the topic of standardisation of HbA1c measurement from the clinician's viewpoint, and a "live" interactive session about thyroid function testing.

The Scottish Region has a very active audit group, chaired by Anne Pollock, and our scientific meetings always have at least one paper either from this group or commissioned by it. Audit topics this year have included solvent analyses, cardiac troponin, protein electrophoresis, and drugs of abuse. This group has started to produce guidelines based on some of these audits.

The Scottish Regional Committee continues with myself as Chair and Dr. Peter Rae as secretary. This year we welcomed Dr. Denis O'Reilly as regional representative on Council (replacing Dr. Anne Cruickshank), and Rachel Edwards as our new East of Scotland trainee representative. We met on three occasions, prior to the regional scientific meetings, on each of the above dates. We now have a brief business meeting at the end of the scientific programme so that members can have an "instant update" (and feed back) on the Committee's deliberations. Matters discussed include Agenda for Change, the Scottish Forum for Healthcare Science, trainee posts, and manpower and workforce planning issues. We have formally responded to the Quality Improvement Scotland's Health Technology Assessment: "The Organisation of Troponin Testing Services". With colleagues from the Royal College of Pathologists and the Senior Scottish Clinical Biochemists we have written to the Scottish Executive Health Department's Director of Human Resources seeking formal representation on the National Workforce Committee.

The Region has always been active in training, and was pleased to host the National Training Course in Glasgow in April.

Overall this has been a busy and successful year for the Scottish Region of the ACB. My thanks are due to the committee members for all their hard work, in particular Dr. Peter Rae, our secretary.

**Dr. Alan S. Hutchison**

## **Federation of Clinical Scientists**

During 2004 I have continued to offer personal support and that of the Federations IR advisors to members. Situations continue to arise in Trust's which should be dealt with locally. Members should be aware that the Scottish Partnership Forum is the body in which policies are agreed and these can be seen via your own Trust intranet sites or on [www.show.scot.nhs.uk/spf/index.htm](http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/spf/index.htm)

The FCS has responded to a number of issues nationally including:  
Foundation Trusts – not applicable in Scotland  
Green Paper on pensions – impact of raising the retirement age (post 2013)  
Healthcare Scientist career development – ACB Executive

The advance letter re pay award 2004/5 (AL(SP)2/2004) has been released and is available via the FCS web site

Within Scotland, there are two ongoing reviews of laboratory organisation in Lothian and Glasgow.

### **Agenda for Change**

The FCS has been preoccupied with the AfC process. It has invested Officer's time in gleaning as much as possible from the Early Implementer Sites (EI). A much clearer understanding of the mechanistic process is now available.

EIs should conclude this month and the DoH will audit the process prior to a roll out. Within Scotland, our 4 shadow implementers have not produced much information related to Clinical Scientists. At least outline structures are in place within Boards and the Executive has been running a road show for "Managers", to promote awareness and the PowerPoint presentations have been circulated.

We now have experience of the Matching Panels. Of the 16 Factors, the key ones are those of Knowledge, Training & Experience and Freedom to Act. Clear descriptions of these attributes are required in Job Descriptions and Person Specifications. A form of words has been developed by one of the EIs to describe the Duty Biochemist role.

### **Scottish Forum for Healthcare Science (SFHS)**

The FCS is one of the two Staff Side organisations represented on this body. Clinical Biochemists are represented via ACS (Heather Cubie) and RCPATH (Graham Beastall). As yet it has no "desk" within the Scottish Executive, unlike the AHP, but it promotes Healthcare Scientists by meeting with relevant organisations. Workforce planning is one of its remits given the poverty of available statistical figures. Details can be accessed via the NHS Education for Scotland website [www.nes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk)

**Richard Spooner**

**The Association of Clinical Biochemists**  
**Scottish Region**  
**STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2003**

	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Debit</b>
Carried forward from 2002	£ 6,705.52	
COMMITTEE EXPENSES		£ 584.65
SPEAKERS' EXPENSES		£ 431.00
MEETING FACILITIES/CATERING		£ 530.00
SPONSORSHIP	£ 850.00	
JOHN KING AWARD		£ 400.00
INTEREST	£ 75.34	
MAIL CHARGES		£ -
CAPITATION	£ 2,007.10	
Carried forward to 2004		£ 7,692.31
	£ 9,637.96	£ 9,637.96

Uncleared debits £ 235.00

Heather Stevenson (Honorary Treasurer)

I certify that the above balance is in accordance with the records, receipts and bank statements supplied to me.

**Signed** .....

**Date** .....

Dr LM Nelson

## **Trainees**

Trainees' Committee meetings were held in April and Sept 2003. Relevant points arising from discussion:

### **Royal College of Pathologists**

The college was approached over the proposed £50 pre-MRCPath registration fee. It was confirmed that this does not apply to clinical scientists, who can register for free, and have free access to the website and bulletin newsletter.

### **Paediatric Training**

One of the aims and objectives set by the Trainees' Committee for 2004, was to assess the level of paediatric biochemistry experience within the training grades, and the extent of training being given in the UK. Rachel Edwards (EoS Trainee rep) has sent a questionnaire on behalf of the trainees committee, to all biochemists who joined the profession after 1993, and those currently studying for MRCPath. The findings from the survey have been submitted as an abstract for Focus 2004 (awaiting confirmation of acceptance). A summary of the findings will be sent to the ACB Education committee and the regional tutors.

### **Training/MRCPath**

- Extending Grade A training to 4 years has been discussed in a number of regions. This has been agreed in Scotland.
- Practice sessions for the new style practical exam were introduced at the Bristol ACB training week in September.
- The West Midlands trainees' website ([wmtc.org.uk](http://wmtc.org.uk)) provides lecture material and past exam papers for the Birmingham MSc course. The West of Scotland trainees have discussed the possibility of sitting future exam papers (arranged locally), to help prepare for MRCPath.
- Trevor Gray has posted a list of recommended texts on the ACB mailbase.

### **Other Issues**

- Edited versions of TC minutes are now available on the Trainee's website.
- New promotional posters have been produced for recruitment events.

**Gillian Gray (WoS Trainee rep)**

**Rachel Edwards (EoS Trainee rep)**

## **Regional Tutor**

### **Grade A Training**

The Grade A Training Scheme continues to work well and the Trainees are making good progress. The help and support provided by a wide variety of staff in many laboratories in Scotland is gratefully acknowledged.

#### The Trainees

The Trainees currently in post are:

##### First year

Ms Sarah Jarvis, Glasgow Royal Infirmary [Supervisor – Dr E Farish]

Ms Eleanor Oakes, Stobhill General Hospital [Supervisor – Dr E Farish]

Mr Neil Squires, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh [Supervisor – Dr JP Ashby]

##### Second Year

Dr Leigh Campbell, Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh [Supervisor – Dr PWH Rae]

Ms Louise Todd, Wishaw General Hospital [Supervisor – Mr EJ Carlyle]

##### Third year

Dr Elaine Davidson – Aberdeen Royal Infirmary [Supervisor – Dr AC Dickie]

Dr Sharon Jenner – Ninewells Hospital and Medical School, Dundee [Supervisor – Dr CG Fraser]

Over the past year Ms Gillian Gray successfully completed her training in Glasgow and has obtained a Grade B post in Monklands Hospital. Also, Ms Susan Knox has been appointed to a Grade B post in Glasgow after 2 years as a Trainee in Edinburgh.

### **Recruitment**

NSD are funding two new Trainees in 2004 and it is proposed that they will be based at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and Ninewells Hospital and Medical School, Dundee. These posts have been advertised recently in the *New Scientist*.

### **Administration**

Tayside University Hospitals NHS Trust continues to hold the contract with NSD for the Scottish Training Scheme for Grade A Clinical Biochemists and this arrangement works very well. Dr Callum Fraser is responsible for the co-ordination and local administration of the scheme in Dundee and the Regional Tutor is responsible for professional matters. It is likely that the annual review of the Training Scheme will take place in May.

### **Extension of Training Scheme**

It is recognised that the requirement for State Registration will place additional demands on both pre-registration Clinical Scientists and the laboratories that support them. Therefore, NSD have agreed that Clinical Biochemists who successfully complete the Grade A Training Scheme in Scotland, will be supported for one further year as pre-registration Clinical Biochemists in supernumerary Grade B posts. These posts will be based in approved training centres that are able to provide a further programme of structured training leading to State Registration and the Part 1 examination for the Membership of the Royal College of Pathologists (MRCPATH). This will offer several advantages:

- There will be a clear focus on achieving the professional competencies required for State Registration.
- Consolidation of the practical and academic skills gained in the Grade A training scheme leading to the Part 1 MRCPATH examination.
- The production of high calibre scientists who will be of greater benefit to the clinical biochemistry laboratory services at an earlier stage.
- It will provide a sound basis for future professional development leading to the MRCPATH.

Clinical Scientist Training Schemes in other disciplines will be extended in a similar way.

**J Peter Ashby**

## Audit

### Introduction

Once again the Scottish Audit Group have had a busy year. An audit slot has been introduced at each regional meeting to allow dissemination and discussion of information regarding audit. Topics covered this year have included discussion of the proposed standards for electrophoresis, useful information regarding the measurement of ethylene glycol and methanol, and troponin analysis. It is intended to continue to use this opportunity to present reports on completed audits, discuss proposed standards and receive feedback on the activities of the Audit Group. Next year the Audit Group hopes to propose standards in the areas of reproductive hormones and fluid analysis. A number of posters on work done by members of the Scottish Audit Group have been submitted to Focus

### Scottish Audits

- A report prepared by Alan Rumley on the survey of availability of out-of-hours tests, and methods in use for investigation of suspected porphyria was sent out to Heads of Department and audit contacts.
- Jacqueline McGuire prepared standards for electrophoresis and following discussion at a regional meeting these have been sent to Heads of Department and audit contacts. It is intended to perform a re-audit against these standards towards the end of this year.
- Jim Allison completed the report of the troponin survey and presented results at both a regional meeting and at the West of Scotland Biochemistry Colloquium. It is intended to re-visit this topic later in the year. The report has been sent to Heads of Department and audit contacts.
- Karen Smith has carried out a survey of practice in fluid analysis. A report is being prepared. Michael Murphy has agreed to draw up some standards in this area.
- Christina Gray has completed the report on requesting patterns in reproductive hormones and this report has been sent out to Heads of Department and audit contacts. It is intended to produce some standards for discussion.
- Anne Pollock has carried out a survey of changes in microalbumin workload following the issuing of the SIGN Guidelines. Preliminary results were presented to the West of Scotland Biochemistry Colloquium.

### *Proposed audits/surveys*

- Survey of glycated haemoglobin methods and organisation of service
- First-line testing in suspected Cushing's syndrome – will include re-audit of original West of Scotland Audit  
Serum electrophoresis in samples where immunoglobulins are requested
- Interpretation of PSA results

### National Audit

- Following a long commitment to the National Audit Group and his appointment as Editor-in-Chief of the Annals Julian Barth has resigned as Chairman. The new Chairman is Eric Kilpatrick. It is hoped to continue discussion with the ACB and the RCPATH regarding a possible audit structure.
- Karen Smith has performed a national survey of the quality of information provided on GP request cards. The data were presented as a poster at a very well attended National Audit Meeting in November 2003, and are being written up for the Annals of Clinical Biochemistry.
- The GI testing audit is completed and results were presented at National Audit Meeting
- The lipid audit in conjunction with HEART UK is in progress
- The NICE guidelines on pre-operative testing have been published and this was suggested as a possible topic for a future audit.
- The guidelines for bilirubin analysis have been commented on and are with David Isherwood.
- The CSF xanthochromia guidelines have been published in the Annals of Clinical Biochemistry.
- Robert Beetham has sent out an audit on discretionary requesting of electrophoresis in laboratories.

The Audit Group would like to thank all those who have responded to the questionnaires that we send out. If there is an area that you are interested in auditing on a Scottish-wide basis please contact me so that the group can provide any help possible.

**Anne Pollock**