

President's Winter Newsletter 2019

63rd Annual Meeting 2019 - La Laguna, Tenerife (June 26-29)

The SRHSB is enormously grateful to Professor Augustin Casteneyra-Perdomo, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of La Laguna, his son Dr Leandro Casteneyra-Ruiz, the local organising committee, the scientific committee and the Conference Organisers, Viajes El Cortes Ingles, for their splendid organisation of this memorable meeting. It was most unfortunate that Leandro was unable to travel from the USA after he worked so hard on our behalf.

'If you could say it in words, there would be no reason to paint'
(Edward Hopper 1882 – 1967).

Thirteen countries from five continents were represented from Chile to Japan. The Scientific Experimental and Clinical Premeetings were followed by some 35 presentations including Invited Lectures by Esteban Rodriguez, Ampar Cuxart, Victor Garcia, David Limbrick and Gundela Meyer. The Final Programme is available on the website. The science was excellent which made selection of the Prize winners very difficult:

Best Clinical Presentation - Dr Trudi Edginton (London, England)

Best Basic Science Presentation – Dr Jason Karimy (New Haven, Connecticut, USA)

President's Prize – Dr Funmilayo Olopade (Ibadan, Nigeria).

The traditional SRHSB camaraderie was much in evidence with time for young and old to mingle, discuss and learn from each other. The local cuisine and wine were outstanding as was the walking tour of the Old Town and the trip to the volcano Teide. Finally, we are very grateful to Augustin for keeping the cost of the meeting so modest through securing sponsorship from, amongst others, the University of La Laguna, Integra, Anuncia and Micrbot.

64th Annual Meeting 2020 – Doha, Qatar (November 4 – 7)

I am delighted to confirm that our next meeting has been organised, yet again, by our Treasurer, Mr Ian Pople, and will be held in Doha, Qatar from November 4th to November 7th 2020. The weather should be a balmy 20-30°C.

Ian has excellent local administrative support. He has reserved the auditorium at Sidra Medicine Women and Children's Hospital. He is finalising the budget for the conference. Crucially, he has secured strong local sponsorship in Doha that will cover the expenses of the meeting. The registration fee will be kept very low (£75-100) for the whole meeting and social program, whilst generating funds for the Society.

He is planning on 100 delegates on a 'first come, first served' basis - members with presentations, society members, invited speakers from Doha, sponsored guest speakers and locals interested in Spina Bifida, Hydrocephalus and Urology/continence.

Preliminary social programme:

- Outing into the desert to see the sun go down with supper on Thursday
- Gala dinner on Friday.
- Optional accompanying program to include visits to museums and possibly a trip on a Dhow on Friday.

Accommodation: there will be a choice of cheap & cheerful (comfortable Premier Inn) B+B at \$70 per night, or plush comfortable B&B at about \$120 (all including breakfast and transport to Sidra Medicine).

Travel: International flights are reasonably priced. Please check whether you will need a visa.

Deadlines

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| Abstract submission | June 1 st 2020 |
| Notification of accepted abstracts | July 1 st 2020 |
| Early bird registration | August 1 st 2020 |
| Meeting | November 4 th – 7 th 2020 |

65th Annual Meeting 2021 – Manchester (Dr Jaleel Miyan).

Dates and details to be announced in due course.

66th Annual Meeting 2022 – Applications are invited to host this meeting.

The Constitution

The AGM in La Laguna formally endorsed our updated Constitution thanks to Andy's diligence and foresight in pursuing this necessary exercise in good governance.

Executive Committee

David Nash has indicated that he would like to step down as Membership Secretary after many years of diligent service. Many thanks David.

The Executive is pondering how to catalyse recruitment in to the SRHSB, particularly of the younger generation. A first initiative is to create a cadre of Representatives from each Continent and a Student Member. Recruitment is everyone's responsibility.

The Website

Thanks to the sterling efforts of our new webmaster Talissa Gasser, ably supported through the transition phase by Carolyn and Waheed, we now have a new website that is already proving to be flexible and readily updated. Importantly, the Executive has agreed with the Treasurer's proposal that there should be a single mechanism (Paypal) for the payment of our subscriptions. This will simplify keeping our membership list up to date. New sections are under development including 'From the Archives' and 'From the Centres'. Talissa and the Executive look forward to your feedback.

New Bursary Fund

One impediment to younger colleagues joining and attending our meetings is the cost. Bristol, La Laguna and Qatar have been and will be run as inexpensively as possible. At

Hazel's suggestion, we have instituted a Bursary fund which our more senior and honorary members, industry and philanthropists might consider supporting.

Mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid – UK Government Consultation

Andy and Jaleel have submitted the SRHSB's response to this Consultation which has now closed – the response is available on our website. We await the Government's response with great interest.

Obituary

It is both very sad and singularly poignant that our former President and Honorary Member, Professor Michael Laurence died after a long illness on December 20th 2018 (BMJ obituary 2019;364:l1208 written by Stephen Laurence). His seminal double blind randomised controlled trial of folate treatment before conception to prevent recurrence of neural-tube defects was published in 1981 (BMJ 282:1509-1511):

'A randomized controlled double-blind trial was undertaken in south Wales to prevent the recurrence of neural-tube defects in women who had had one child with a neural-tube defect. Sixty women were allocated before conception to take 4 mg of folic acid a day before and during early pregnancy and 44 complied with these instructions. Fifty-one women were allocated to placebo treatment. There were no recurrences among the compliant mothers but two among the non-compliers and four among the women in the placebo group. Thus there were no recurrences among those who received supplementation and six among those who did not; this difference is significant ($p = 0.04$). It is concluded that folic acid supplementation might be a cheap, safe, and effective method of primary prevention of neural-tube defects but that this must be confirmed in a large, multicentre trial'.

Partner organisations

The SRHSB was founded in 1957 in response to concerns about the progress of congenital hydrocephalus that led to early death or permanent disability. There have been major advances over the past 60 years and many areas of relevant multidisciplinary research are now shared with other scientific societies, of which many of us are also members. It is only sensible to liaise with these other bodies over shared goals that advance the care of our patients. We need to be more inclusive, for example, of paediatrics, urology, neuro-orthopaedics and neuropsychology. Both in St Louis and again in Qatar, paediatric urology will be highlighted.

The Board of Directors of the International Society for Hydrocephalus and CSF Disorders, rebranded as the Hydrocephalus Society, are friends and colleagues and includes Carolyn, Hazel and Pat. I was an Invited Speaker at their recent Hydrocephalus 2019 meeting in Vancouver. Our Societies are different but complimentary, not least in our financial models. As a first step, we will be advertising each other's meetings on our respective websites.

With all best wishes for the festive season and looking forward to meeting up in Doha,
John

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