

BSGM Chair's update December 2017

This is my first update since taking up office in October 2017 and I want to start of course by thanking Bill Newman for his fantastic two years as chair of the BSGM. He will be the first to say that he was ably assisted by others on BSGM Council, which is of course true, but he deserves a special thank you for his skilful leadership, yet approachable and friendly manner during his tenureship. BSGM has spent several years needing to be rather inward facing because of the financial crisis we found ourselves in, but Bill has helped to turn this around so we now have an outward facing society whose advice is increasingly being sought. I look forward to working with you all to keep developing our society in this way.

House of Commons select committee

A good example of BSGM being more outward facing is Bill's appearance at the HoC select committee on genomics and gene editing. The written submission that prompted a request for verbal evidence is [here](#). If you missed it you can watch the whole afternoon [here](#) or read the transcript of proceedings [here](#). Sue Hill and Mark Kroese contributed to the same evidence giving session, and a further evidence session at which Hilary Burton and Sian Ellard (amongst others) gave evidence is available [here](#). Both are worth a watch and highlight well the issues that we face over the next few years.

Draft NHSE test directory

Many of you expressed concern that you had not been able to see the draft test directory because this was only issued to limited parties under strict non-disclosure agreements. BSGM sent this [email](#) to Profs Hill and Caulfield on 22nd November in response to these concerns. To date we have not received a response and note the deadline for feedback is now passed. We hope that sufficient BSGM members have had an opportunity to feedback.

Future NHS genomic services

The headline BBC news on 1st December was the lack of expert radiology services across the UK, particularly in one hospital [not very far](#) from where I write this, [and also](#) Junior doctors were being asked to interpret XRays when they did not consider themselves to have the training to do so. I sincerely hope such a scenario will not be repeated in genomic medicine. As a speciality we need to be available to be the equivalent of the expert radiologist to support our colleagues who are "mainstreaming" genomic medicine. Genomic reports will sometimes be very easy to interpret and not need any specialist skills, but -as the DDD study and 100,000 genomes project have already demonstrated- they will often be rather complex. Many of us are already involved in multidisciplinary teams of specialised clinicians, scientists and bioinformaticians to interpret genomic 'imaging' for patients and their families and BSGM members should be proud to be at the forefront of this NHS development.

Conferences and Meetings

The annual BSGM one day conference at RCP was another great success with many voicing their preference for a one day meeting over the old three day one. Thank you to the conference organisers for ensuring the event ran so smoothly and the many excellent speakers.

Emma Woodward also helped to organise the Joint BSGM and Genetics Society meeting on the 23rd and 24th November 2017 at the Royal Society, London on "The Human Genome in Healthcare". It was good to see plenty of BSGM members in attendance and as speakers.

The BSGM contributed to a Retreat at the Wellcome Genome Campus on the 10th and 11th October "Making genomic medicine safe - The Process of Genetic Diagnosis and Communication of Genomic Results." Organised by Dr Helen Firth and colleagues. A report of the meeting will be available in due course.

Unfortunately the forthcoming meeting mentioned in the last update date: 8th March 2018 (at the Royal College of Physicians, London as part of the 500th anniversary of the College), has just recently been cancelled by the RCP president as part of a self imposed austerity package. This is a

great shame as we had fantastic speakers lined up. The president of the RCP has written to apologise for this.

Joint Committee on genomics in medicine

Congratulations to Helen Firth on being appointed as the next chair of this committee and many thanks to retiring chair Nick Lench for his work over the last three years. You can read more about the committee [here](#)

BSGM constitution

Those of you at the AGM in the 5th October will know that our constitution has been revised, ratified by the Charity Commission and approved of at the AGM. This also formalised the new special interest group of Fetal Genomics and the inaugural chair Dr Carol Gardiner is therefore duly invited onto CGS council.

REF panel

BSGM has been asked to nominate colleagues who would like to be considered for research excellence framework exercise (REF) panel members. More information [here](#) please contact me if you would like BSGM to nominate you by noon, 20 December 2017

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The administration for the BSGM is managed by the Royal Society of Biology. Any questions call 020 37937851 or email membership@bsgm.org.uk

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