

BSMM News

July 2007



BSMM News and Membership List July 2007

The BSMM had several reasons to celebrate at its Annual Meeting this year, amongst which were Dr Elizabeth Johnson agreeing to continue for a second term as President of the Society, and the extension of the BSMM Diploma to be offered as an MSc programme.

In this edition of the newsletter I hope to keep you up to date with developments from the annual meeting and other news. Remember, if there is anything you would like to see or any articles you would like to contribute, please contact me at susan.howell@kcl.ac.uk.

Sue Howell

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Conference report: 2006

The European Fungal PCR Consensus group – One small step in the right direction.

There is general consensus that detecting fungal DNA in clinical specimens is a good approach for the diagnosis of invasive fungal infection. However, with no agreement over optimal sample-type, DNA extraction procedure and PCR method, fungal PCR is yet to be included criteria for defining invasive fungal disease. Even the soon to be published second version of the European Organisation for the Research and Treatment of Cancer and the US Mycoses Study Group (EORTC-MSG) criteria does not include PCR and this is primarily due to the lack of standardisation of fungal PCR assays. The UK-Ireland Fungal PCR Consensus Group has gone some way to address this with the

publication of its inaugural paper “A consensus on fungal PCR diagnosis? – A UK-Ireland evaluation of PCR methods for detection of systemic fungal infections”¹. The work of the group has been widely supported, both within the British Isles and overseas and in Paris.

In June 2006 a preliminary meeting was held to assess support for the formation of a European Fungal PCR Consensus group. The enthusiastic feedback led to the establishment of multinational group consisting of 24 laboratory and 60 clinical participants, with many centres consisting of a paired laboratory and clinical contact and participants from outside Europe; Australia, United Arab Emirates and USA. To direct the group two working parties, the laboratory and clinical working parties were voted in and chaired by Juergen Loeffler (Wuerzburg University) and Rosemary Barnes (Cardiff University), respectively. The overall European Fungal PCR consensus steering group is chaired Peter Donnelly (Radboud University, Nijmegen).

The group has sought collaboration with commercial partners and other organisations (ISHAM, EORTC, European Bone Marrow Transplantation (EBMT-IDWP), ECMM and also the BSMM) and has received encouraging responses.

In September 2006 the laboratory working group (Stephane Bretagne, Paris; Niklas Finstrom, Sangtec, Stockholm; Juergen Loeffler, Wuerzburg; Monique Mennink, Nijmegen and Lewis White, Cardiff) met in Frankfurt to discuss the issues with fungal PCR but also on how to evaluate PCR performance in participating centres. It was decided to follow the example of the UK consensus group in distributing QC control panels. These would be EDTA whole blood (2 mL) and serum (1 mL) spiked with varying levels of *Aspergillus fumigatus* conidia and DNA, respectively. As such, these panels would evaluate both DNA extraction and PCR amplification procedures currently in use. To test its validity the first panel has just been distributed to 8 preliminary centres, who will use any commercial DNA extraction kit to test the serum specimens but may use any method involving either lysis or bead-beating when extracting the whole blood samples. The PCR system should be the one most familiar to the user, but testing by more than one PCR assay is encouraged. The results should be returned by the middle of January 2007 with a meeting arranged in Paris at the end of January 2007. If successful the panel will then be distributed to the other 16 participating centres,

including all members of the UK consensus group, within the foreseeable future.

In itself the establishment of a group is a small step but the results generated by that group may be of major significance and it is hoped that the findings of the European consensus group will be a major step forward for the inclusion of PCR in to future criteria for diagnosing invasive fungal infections.

¹**A consensus on fungal PCR diagnosis? – A UK-Ireland evaluation of PCR methods for detection of systemic fungal infections.** P. Lewis White¹, Richard Barton², Malcolm Guiver³, Christopher J. Linton⁴, Steve Wilson⁵, Melvyn Smith⁶, Beatriz L. Gomez⁷, Michael J. Carr⁸, Patrick T. Kimmitt⁹, Shila Seaton⁷, Kumar Rajakumar⁹, Tessa Holyoake¹⁰, Chris C. Kibbler⁷, Elizabeth Johnson⁴, Richard P. Hobson², Brian Jones¹¹ and Rosemary A. Barnes¹ on behalf of the UK Fungal PCR consensus group. *Journal of Molecular Diagnostics*, 8: 376-384, 2006.

P. Lewis White and Richard Barton

BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting 2007

The 2007 BSMM Annual Meeting was held at Devonshire Hall, in the University of Leeds, from 18th-20th March 2007 and was attended by 79 delegates. There were 7 sessions covering topics to appeal in all aspects of medical mycology, including: antifungal agents, epidemiology, immunity, and molecular mycology.

The 2007 BSMM Foundation Lecture was delivered by Professor Neil Gow from Aberdeen, entitled “*Candida albicans*: profile of a pathogen”. The lecture took the audience on a voyage through *Candida* research from the Aberdeen Fungal Group and eloquently linked the research observations of 25 years ago to the understanding of molecular mechanisms being discovered today.

Professor Ted White of the Seattle Biomedical Research Institute provided the ISHAM-funded Glyn Evans Lecture “The master sterol regulator UPC2 in *Candida Albicans* regulates sterol genes and is regulated by sterols”.

The Society is always grateful for the sponsorship and support it receives from industry, which supports it in carrying out its educational functions. This year the Annual Meeting was supported by sponsorship of £11,500, from: Associates of Cape Cod, Cephalon, Gilead Sciences, MSD, NeuTech Pharma, Pfizer and Schering-Plough.

Lastly the social event of the meeting, the Annual Dinner, took place in the Thackray Medical Museum in Leeds (www.thackraymuseum.org/), and delegates were given ample opportunity to roam the museum prior to the dinner. The museum contained recreated scenes

from the way of life in bygone centuries and had a number of interactive displays (including sound and smell) that were immense fun to discover.

Sue Howell

BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting 2008

The 2008 BSMM Annual Meeting will be held on the campus of the University of East Anglia from 30th March to 1st April 2008. Accommodation will be provided locally in a combination of single, twin and double rooms, and the Annual Dinner will be held at the Sainsbury centre.

Silke Schelenz, Local Organiser

BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting 2009

Dr Elaine Bignell kindly offered to host and be the local organiser for the 2009 BSMM Annual Meeting at Imperial College London in the South Kensington Campus.

UK Clinical Mycology Network Annual Meeting 2007

The First Annual Meeting of the UK Clinical Mycology Network followed the BSMM Annual Meeting at Leeds University. This was a half day meeting attended by 30 delegates representing all areas of the UK. Following an introduction by Dr Chris Kibbler, Chair of the UKCMN, the programme covered the new dermatology SOP from the HPA, reporting of superficial isolates, laboratory audits, funding for PCR projects, testing an automated antibody assay, and a review of posaconazole.

The aims of the UKCMN are to “ensure the provision of the highest standard of clinical mycology services, including the maintenance of quality across related disciplines, throughout the UK”, and an annual meeting is one of the approaches to achieve this through communication and opportunities for discussion. As several members of the BSMM are also members of the UKCMN, and both societies share the desire to provide quality clinical diagnostics, it is hoped that the 2008 UKCMN meeting will take place on the afternoon of the last day of the 2008 BSMM Annual Meeting in Norwich.

The UKCMN webpage can be found on the HPA website under Fungal Infection on Topics A-Z.

www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/fungal_infections/ukcmn.htm

BSMM Website

As announced in the last newsletter the BSMM website is currently being re-designed. Progress has been made with the update and the new-look website should be live at www.bsmm.org soon. The BSMM has hired a company, MyDent Multimedia and Web Design, to do the major reconstruction. At the Annual Meeting in Leeds, members agreed to set up a BSMM website Working party to expedite the web site makeover, members are Ruth Ashbee, Gary Moran, Gillian Shankland, Silke Schelenz and Carol Munro (Chair). We are very much interested in representing the needs and interests of the entire society. If you have any suggestions regarding what you would like to see on the new website please drop Carol Munro an e-mail. Likewise, any news articles, meeting/course announcements, job advertisements and images would be very gratefully received. Please contact Carol Munro at c.a.munro@abdn.ac.uk.

Carol Munro

Forthcoming meetings

6th 'Infocus' meeting on fungal infections and clinical practice.

16th-18th August 2007, Curitiba, Brazil.

Details: www.gt5.com.br/INFOCUSen

Society for General Microbiology 161st Meeting

University of Edinburgh, UK

3rd-6th September 2007

Details: www.sgm.ac.uk/meetings

3rd Trends in Medical Mycology (TIMM)

28th-31st October 2007, Torino, Italy

Details: www.TIMM2007.org

Federation of Infection Societies - Scientific Meeting 2007.

28-30th November 2007, Cardiff, UK

Details: www.sgm.ac.uk/fis2007

3rd Advances Against Aspergillosis

16th-19th January 2008, Miami Beach, Florida, USA

Details: www.aaa2008.org

9th ASM Conference on *Candida* and Candidiasis

24th -28th March 2008, New York City

Details:

www.asm.org/Meetings/index.asp?bid=51311

Society for General Microbiology 162nd Meeting

Edinburgh International Conference Centre, UK

31st March – 3rd April 2008

Details: www.sgm.ac.uk/meetings

2008 BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting

30th March - 1st April 2008, Norwich, UK

Details: www.bsmm.org

Society for General Microbiology 162nd Meeting

Edinburgh International Conference Centre, UK

31st March – 3rd April 2008

Details: www.sgm.ac.uk/meetings

Society for General Microbiology 163rd Meeting

Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

8th-11th September 2008

Details: www.sgm.ac.uk/meetings

41st Congress of the German-speaking Mycological Association (DMYKG). 6-8 September 2007, Berlin, Germany.

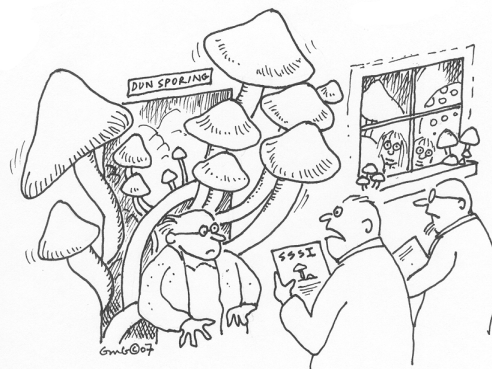
Details: www.isham.org/news.asp

3rd Trends in Medical Mycology (TIMM-3)

28th – 31st October 2007, Torino, Italy

Details: www.timm2007.org

And finally...



"Look on the bright side - your house is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest!"

Geoff

Items for the next BSMM Newsletter

If you have any ideas, reviewed a mycology book, or come across something that would be of interest to our community, and that would be suitable for publication in the BSMM Newsletter please email Sue at susan.howell@kcl.ac.uk



BSMM membership

Current membership of the BSMM stands at 307 members. The BSMM welcomes the following members to the Society members, who have joined since publication of the last Newsletter: Mark Fraser (Bristol), Lisa Griffiths (Dartford), Howard Jenkinson (Bristol), Girija Teli (Pontypridd), Eilidh Mowat (Glasgow) and Mary Mathews (Vellore, India). The Society would also like to congratulate Dr Dai Roberts (Glasgow), who was elected to Honorary Membership at the 2007 AGM.

BSMM Membership List – July 2007

To facilitate communication between members an up-to-date membership list follows. Details are as accurate as possible, and reflect what is currently stored in the BSMM Membership database. If you see anything that is inaccurate (about yourself or another member) please inform the Secretary, Richard Hobson, by e-mail at richard.hobson@leedsth.nhs.uk.