



Association for Clinical Cytogenetics

<http://www.cytogenetics.org.uk>

**ACC Council Meeting
Canterbury Hall, Cartwright Gardens, London
Tuesday 5th June 2007**

Kim Smith	Chairman
John Wolstenholme	Treasurer
Rob Morgan	Assistant Secretary

Amanda Dixon-M ^o Iver	<i>Ordinary Member</i>	Maj Hulten	<i>President</i>
Gordon Lowther	<i>Ordinary Member/Chair, ETC</i>	Rod Howell	<i>Trustee</i>
Ros Hastings	<i>Ordinary Member</i>		
Sandra Birdsall	<i>Ordinary Member</i>		
Suzanne M ^c Phee	<i>Junior Member</i>		
Simon M ^c Cullough	<i>Junior Member</i>		
Fiona Harding	<i>Junior Member</i>		
Mandeep Bahra	<i>Junior Member</i>		
Karen Thompson	<i>Genetic Technologist</i>		

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Beverley Royston, Teresa Davies, Lorraine Gaunt, Jonathan Waters, Peter Howard, John Crolla, Stephen Mountford and Val Davison

2 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th March 2007

Agreed.

3 Chairs Report

3.1 Rule Changes

These have now been registered with the Friendly Society. The ACC name has changed to The Association for Clinical Cytogenetics. Gavin Cuthbert is to amend the website and changes will be made to headed notepaper. Heads of Laboratories will be informed. ADM will notify members in the next BSHG newsletter. JWo will change bank account details, but will require the notification from the Register of Friendly Societies.

Action - KS/TD to inform Heads of Laboratories.

3.2 Training Modernisation

There has been no further development from SfH since February.

Sue Hill informed the ACS AGM that the DH will be taking training modernisation back under DH control. The technologists are awaiting the re-writing of the NOS before finalising their training programme however they will proceed with the training programme if there is going to be a significant delay in the production of the new NOS.

Action - KS to approach Andrew Butcher and ask for an update on SfH and NOS.

3.3 Universal Ethical Code for Scientists

Council agrees to support the code.

Action KS to respond to Sue Hill

3.4 Enhancing the profile of Senior Scientists

Sue Hill has organised a series of meetings nationally aimed at developing leadership for minority groups. VD and LG received invitations to attend. LG reported to KS that the meetings were organised as workshops similar to management training.

3.5 DH Assessors

The ACB are to continue with the scheme of National Assessors established after AL(SP)1/90, and they are trying to enlist the support of the RCPATH. The consensus of council was to support ACB. RCPATH and ACS to be contacted and informed that ACC would like to continue with this scheme and would review the existing list of Cytogenetics assessors. It was agreed to promote the scheme in the

Newsletter and to HoDs.

Actions - GL to check on participation in Scotland

SB to check on participation in Wales

TD/JWo to review assessor list

KS to contact RCPATH and ACS

3.6 **Payment by Results**

KS asked UKGTN for an update, and this was circulated to HoDs.

It is not envisaged that genetics (including cytogenetics) will be part of PbR before 2009/2010.

3.7 **Array CGH for UKGTN**

The UKGTN report in 2006 stated that aCGH was a viable test for children with learning difficulties as an adjunct to routine cytogenetic analysis. As cost decreases, access will increase. The report contained 7 proposals and ACC was asked if it would co-ordinate a data collection on current array use in NHS labs. Information required includes best estimate of tests performed for postnatal learning difficulties per 6 months and information on how revenue funding is met locally. It was agreed to:

1. Ask laboratories for numbers and % of referrals they have done to date.
2. Ask Clinical geneticists what are considered appropriate referrals.
3. What is the current funding situation.
4. Present to UKGTN the position we are at now, what we see happening in the future and guideline figures for demand.

Action – KS to respond to UKGTN and initiate questionnaire

3.8 **Role for Junior Members**

KS said that she saw a role for the Junior Members in promoting cytogenetics at careers fairs as well as preparing information for careers departments in universities. They could also produce information for new members.

3.9 **Contacts for European Initiatives.**

RHa has been the first point of contact for genetic initiatives in Europe, however it would be better if ACC had more direct involvement and other members of council would be better suited as contacts eg. LG liaise over best practice and GL over education. Council agreed with this. RHa endorsed this arrangement in view of UKNEQAS workload. EuroGenTest is drawing up lists of links and we need to ensure that the relevant members of Council are represented.

3.10 **DH oversight arrangements for Genetics Reference Laboratories**

The DH has invited the professional bodies to participate in a steering group to provide oversight for the reference laboratories.

The reference laboratories have had their contracts renewed.

KS is to meet with the chair of CMGS (Graham Taylor), Nick Cross and Rob Elles to discuss the Reference Laboratories workplans. The meeting will be on 14th June. Council would like the Reference Laboratories to develop and assess technologies to a point where they can be put into service by diagnostic laboratories. Other suggestions included banks of probes, sequencing and expression arrays, development of a global overview, automation, reference materials and non-invasive fetal testing.

3.11 **Partnership working with CMGS**

KS suggested that the ACC and CMGS executives should meet. Areas where we are or could work together include:-

1. Joint conference (shared day planned for Spring Conference in Liverpool).
2. ETC and TAB already beginning to work together on training modernisation.
3. More joint best practice guidelines.
4. Technologists registration and training.
5. Raising profile.

Council supported a joint meeting.

Action KS to liaise with Graham Taylor

3.12 **ACC profile**

Do we need to raise our profile with genetics related external bodies? Council felt that we were good at what we do, just that we do it quietly.

MH suggested that we could promote cytogenetics through education and with schools.

4 **Structure of Council**

The proposed changes to council were discussed and the consensus was to accept the previous proposals. The Genetic Technologists felt that a Technologist committee on Council was unnecessary as there would be duplication with AGTC. It was proposed that the Junior members sit on Council in their own right and a separate sub committee to support the membership could be established rather than operating as a JLC committee within Council. It was noted that rule changes would be required.

Action KS to redraft structure document and investigate which rules require changing.

- 5 **ETC**
GL presented the report, there has been no formal meeting since last council, but ongoing work was discussed.
- 5.1 **Pre-registration Training**
- 5.1.1 **First assessments**
13 first assessments completed (Nov 2006-May2007).
- 5.1.2 **Training Records**
GC currently monitoring case scenarios and experimental plans in current training records, and will produce modified (updated) ETC Clinical Scientist training Handbook prior to the 2007 intake.
- 5.1.3 **Final Assessments**
18 Final assessments carried out with 2 fails. (These are the first two failures since establishment of National Trainer post, March 2005) No consistent features between the two.
- 5.1.4 **Projects**
10 projects received, all reported as 'original' following plagiarism checks.
Concern amongst the external assessors regarding the standard of some of the recently submitted projects led to additional guidelines being circulated to the 'trainer network'. These were also placed on the ACC ETC website on 10/04/07. The key information was a clarification of the length of time (14 weeks) expected to be spent on the laboratory aspects of the project.
- 5.1.5 **Project exemptions**
6 approved.
- 5.1.6 **Trainee Course: Prenatal/Leukaemia – 14th - 18th May**
31 trainees attended, Feedback not fully analysed as yet but very positive response to the return to the original venue (Jury's Inn rather than the Station Hotel)
- 5.1.7 **October/November 2007 residential course**
For 2007 intake – scheduled for end Oct/beginning Nov (provisionally 29th-2nd). Request that the next course be held elsewhere as a 'one-off'. Possibly under the supervision of one of the other WP funded trainers. This was agreed.
- 5.1.8 **e-learning**
Following revision of the ACC website (March 2007) the password was changed on the ETC site
- 5.2 **Post-registration training**
ETC Survey : Conducted by Sian Morgan and Simon McCullough. 21 responses from labs. Split into two main sections MRCPPath preparation training and Post-registration training including CPD. Salient outcomes from this survey were :
MRCPPath preparation training
- 50/50 split of labs running their own MRCPPath study group, however all respondents were able to access an external group.
 - 75% of study groups met the users needs (20% did not answer and 5% [n=1] thought the groups did not meet their needs)
 - Of the study groups running 50% of them were open to individuals from other labs.
 - Variety of preparation techniques used but by far the commonest form was 'essay preparation'
 - 50% of the groups operated within the working week, 25% outside (lunchtimes) and 25% split the time 50/50 ('work' and 'own')
- Post-registration training including CPD.
- 50% of labs have a training program in place, 75% have a seminar program and 85% have a journal club.
 - The majority also have a range of other educational activities for staff.
 - Virtually all eligible staff could attend external courses, ACC study days or conferences, participation being subject to some local rules
 - Majority of respondents (60%) felt that the combination of internal education, ACC study days and conferences met the educational needs of their staff.
- These data will be further assessed and circulated to labs for information.
- 5.3 **Technical Training**
Work on the training scheme still on hold until SfH complete the re-write of the NOS and mapping them onto competences and job descriptions. SfH recently held a Reference Workshop in an attempt to 'unbundle' some of the more difficult NOS. GL (as Chair of ETC and SI with previous experience of NOS) attended.
- 5.4 **Workforce Review Team**
Four year funding has now been agreed for the requested six WP funded trainees for 2007. Further three year funding has also been agreed for the trainer posts, plus administrative support for the

- National trainer.
- 5.5 **Study days**
February: Bristol MRCPATH preparation – Cancelled (only two registrants despite lots of interest)
Sex Determination and Clinical Management – Scheduled for 6th Oct. – Newcastle
Flyer to be placed in BSHG Newsletter inviting laboratories to consider running a study day.
- 5.6 **Workforce Data**
Report for year ending 31/03/2005 distributed to all HoDs on 03/04/2007.
Report for 31/03/2006 currently being prepared but two data returns still outstanding.
Next census form will be in a format to accommodate AfC gradings however the next data collection may be a mixture of both.
- 5.7 **Skills for Health**
No further action or information since last Council meeting.
- 6 **Professional Standards Committee**
- 6.1 LG has agreed to chair the PSC, JWa will be her deputy.
- 6.2 Draft workplan proposed, based on responses to the questionnaire circulated to all HoDs. Supported by Council.
The audit data will be tidied up so that it is easier and simpler to submit and then the data should be distributed in a more timely fashion. *Post meeting note:* John Emslie has joined the team with the remit of collecting, collating and publishing audit (part 1) data.
- 6.3 **Action KS to respond to LG supporting workplan**
QF-PCR Best Practice Guidelines
LG has received very little response since distributing to HoDs. It is intended to have a single set of guidelines this time. Council asked that paragraph one in service overview be amended so that it read ‘...with appropriate training, should analyse....’. It was also felt that point 4 in the section on analysis needed rewording.
Council agreed with the proposal that it be reformatted in the style of other best practice guidelines.
Action KS to ask LG to amend and reformat in style consistent with other BP guidelines.
- 6.4 CMGS are holding a meeting on Maternal Cell Contamination on 29 June. Up to two people are invited from each joint cyto/molecular laboratory. It is felt that the meeting is very much aimed at molecular clarification of maternal cell contamination.
- 6.5 **OECD Guidelines**
OECD (Organisation for economic co-operation & development) are releasing [quality assurance for molecular genetic testing](#) guidelines. These guidelines will also be applicable to cytogenetics.
- 7 **JLC report**
- 7.1 JLC suggested that their name change to Specialist and Trainee Representative Committee, but it was decided to hold the name change until the committee and Council structures were decided.
- 7.2 **Spring Conference – Sheffield**
JLC thanked Gordon Lowther and Suzanne McPhee for their presentations.
- 7.3 **Website**
The CPD records portfolio is now on the website.
JLC are aiming to provide a composite cytogenetics Registration portfolio on the website.
- 7.4 **BSHG Newsletter**
An article will appear in the next Newsletter on CPD, including feedback from the CPD records questionnaire.
- 7.5 **Careers Questionnaire**
JLC responded to a questionnaire from Edinburgh University careers service. The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services ([AGCAS](#)) is the professional association of careers professionals in higher education, and it may be possible to promote cytogenetics as a career on their website.
ACTION JLC to investigate dissemination of careers information. Also to liaise with Steve Morris who currently co-ordinates careers information for ETC.
- 7.6 **ACC Membership**
KS asked that the JLC and technologist members of council think about how to try to recruit non-members of the profession. Awaiting response from Ruth Cole/BSHG on membership numbers.
Action JW obtaining membership numbers from Ruth Cole (ongoing)
- 8 **Technologists Report**
- 8.1 **Training for Trainers Course**
This will take place at Oxford Spire and there will be 18 places. CMGS have declined to run a similar

- course. This course will be free to departments for ACC members. This will be a one-off arrangement and any future courses will need to cover their costs.
- 8.2 **AGTC**
Helen Snowden has left, she will be replaced by a cytogenetics member. Applications will be invited via advertisement.
- 8.3 **VRC**
The VRC has its first non-AGTC cytogenetic member. There has been a disappointing number of registrants and it may be more publicity is required. There will be articles in the VRC newsletter eg 'Whats in it for me?' and there will be a focus on Cytogenetic Technologists in the July issue. There will also be a push in the BSHG newsletter. AGTC may also suggest that HoDs include registration in person specifications when advertising posts.
AGTC need to identify how many Genetic technologists there are in the profession and the percentage that belong to a professional body.
- 8.4 **Education and Training**
The next AGTC meeting will be dedicated to training. KT enquired if the ACC would support another Technical Training Day. Council agreed.
- 8.5 **Committees, Roles and Elections**
The AGTC committee needs to revisit structure and roles. It was agreed that AGTC officially started on 1 April 2006 for terms of office and elections.
- 8.6 **Entry Level for Registration**
The entry level suggested by ETC and TAB was AfC band 5 and/or MTO2, AGTC agreed with this. Marcus Allen will draw up a suggested career structure.
- 8.7 The AGM report will be presented by Michelle Fenlon
- 9 **Report back from Meetings**
- 9.1 **GenCAG**
No report
- 9.2 **RCPath**
No report
- 9.3 **JCMG**
No report
- 9.4 **BSHG**
JWa attended. There were no items for council to address.
- 9.5 **FHCS**
The meeting was attended by ADM. A report was circulated prior to the meeting.
- 9.5.1 **FHCS involvement**
FHCS have commissioned a review into their structure and organisation.
Council agreed to continue to subscribe to FHCS (£500).
- 9.6 **ACS**
Sue Hill presented update on training modernisation
- 10 **Scientific items/UKNEQAS/UKCCG**
- 10.1 **Research Project Funding**
This was advertised in the Newsletter. Applications will be evaluated in July, and Council will be asked to verify the awards at the September Council meeting.
- 10.2 **CEQA**
Tony Parkin will act as ACC representative.
- 11 **Treasurers Report**
- 11.1 **Registrar of Friendly Societies**
Notification of name change required from Registrar to change bank details
- 11.2 **Spring Meeting**
The Sheffield meeting was a financial success
- 11.3 **Travel Awards**
There has been one application for a travel award, from Lorna Crawford, for £250. There has been an enquiry from a member abroad.
- 12 **Correspondence**
- 12.1 **DH review of Shortage professions**
Workforce review team have asked for supporting evidence and documents that cytogenetics continues

to be a Home Office Shortage Occupation.

Action SB to liaise with Barbara Gibbons & respond

12.2 **CSO Conference**

This will be held 27-28 November.

12.3 **CytoCell**

CytoCell would like to advertise on the website. As they are corporate members this was agreed.

12.4 **Applications for membership**

Applications have been received from 7 technical staff (2 are not graduates), 9 trainees and one senior scientist.

12.5 **AGTC registrar**

The AGTC registrar has contacted professional bodies to suggest considering alternative formats to meetings as part of carbon off-setting.

13 **Matters Arising**

13.1 **On-line Case Handling CPD**

RHa produced a discussion document prior to the meeting. RHa suggested that the administration of this was best done by CEQA.

13.2 **AGM**

A decision on when to hold the AGM has been deferred. This years meeting will be at BSHG.

14 **Any Other Business**

14.1 **Newsletter**

The cytogenetics section of the newsletter will be edited by ADM and SM for the next 3 years.

Next meeting Tuesday 4th September, Council Room, Royal College of Pathologists, London