

Dear Fellow Clotter

As I come to the end of my three terms on council, I would like to take this opportunity to thank again all those who have made contributions to the newsletter over the past six years. I would like to make particular mention of Tim Brighton who helped me out early on when my confidence needed a boost and who supplied many pieces in those early years.

I have had the pleasure and privilege to serve as editor under three wonderful ASTH Presidents. To Hatem, Mark and Chris – thank you for your support and effort in supplying the backbone of each edition of the newsletter. It has been a very rewarding experience serving on the ASTH Council. I have met many outstanding people and learnt more than I could have imagined. It is with some sadness that I realise this will be my last edition as editor, but then again it will be nice not to send out deadline reminders.

Emma Perrin

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

The last few months have been full for clotting enthusiasts and this edition of the newsletter will cover many of the highlights.

A large Australasian contingent attended the very successful (but very packed) ISTH conference in Boston in July. Several local “stars” featured in the programme, including plenary lectures by Phillip Hogg (UNSW) on disulfide regulation of coagulation proteins and receptors, and Shaun Jackson (Monash) on platelet adhesion, as well as an entertaining session on snake venom coagulopathy by Geoff Isbister in the Asia-Pacific symposium.

For those who were “holding the fort”, our conference report will mention some of the most newsworthy sessions, and I’d encourage you to check out ISTH’s State of the Art book for a wide range of topical reviews. Closer to home, we’re gearing up for the Adelaide HAA meeting, with an excellent programme of international and local speakers now confirmed. There are a record number of ASTH abstracts submitted, showing our members’ commitment to research and innovation. The ASTH workshop on the Saturday will again be a magnet for laboratory scientists and clinicians, and provide an opportunity to discuss the many changes in our field. These changes include the roll-out of the oral anti-Xa and antithrombin agents for orthopaedic prophylaxis, and continuing problems with access to familiar drugs.

The lack of access to danaparoid for the foreseeable future is a real challenge for our clinicians, as we try to manage suspected and proven HITs cases with lepirudin infusions. Close liaison with the coagulation laboratory is needed to use this drug safely – and all this at a time when rapid screening tests for HIT have also been withdrawn, at least temporarily. Diagnosis and management of HIT will be a feature of this year’s workshop, so don’t miss it.

Before the October HAA, we expect the publication of the new NHMRC/NICS guidelines on venous thromboembolism prophylaxis. These will provide guidance for medical and surgical inpatients, and include the newer anticoagulants for major orthopaedic surgery. No doubt they will prompt some vigorous debate in the medical and public spheres, and hopefully will reinforce the need for effective and safe prophylaxis in our hospitals. As state health bodies move to adopt mandatory VTE risk assessment and prophylaxis, ASTH members will become involved in strategies to improve our performance, particularly for medical patients. Watch this space!

Apart from the national meeting, ASTH aims to support educational activities for trainees and junior staff. There

will be a one-day workshop on challenges in coagulation (reviewed in this newsletter) for NSW haematology registrars and scientists, in late September. We believe that coagulation will continue to be an evolving and challenging discipline, and one where Australasian scientists and clinicians will still play a significant role – but only if we stay active as mentors and motivators for the next generation. There’s also a lot to be said for a clinical discipline where almost everybody gets better!

This will be my last newsletter as President of ASTH, and I must acknowledge all the hard work of my fellow Council members and our Secretariat, which has kept our Society on a steady path.

Several of us will be retiring from Council at the October meeting, including our esteemed Editor, Emma Perrin. Thanks to her enthusiasm, and quiet determination to meet the deadlines, this newsletter has thrived and developed a keen following amongst the Society. Emma, you’ve done a great job and will be greatly missed. Nominations for new Councillors have now closed – the healthy level of interest means that an election will be called in the coming month, to select the new Council and I’d urge all ASTH members to cast their vote and have a say in the running of your Society. For myself, it’s been a real privilege to have been on Council for the last few years, working with colleagues who are also passionate about our field, and prepared to do the extra yards to make it happen. I remain impressed with the impact our relatively small membership has in Australia, and beyond – and as we build new ties with our counterparts in the Asia-Pacific region, the Society should only grow stronger. We look forward to your continued support, and hope to see many of you at Adelaide.

Chris Ward

NEW MEMBERS

The ASTH would like to welcome the following members who have joined since the last newsletter:

Ram Suppiah
Nada Hamad
Brad McEwen
Olivia Yacoub
Sheridan Heathcote
John Ivey
David Du
Anne Pilotelle
Reem Alqunfoidi
Steven Austin

We would also like to welcome those new members who wish to keep their contact details private.

SECRETARIAT NEWS

This year is an election year for ASTH Council. Nomination forms were distributed in August and we have received 10 nominations. There are only 8 Council positions and hence we will be holding an election.

This is the first election I've been involved with (I believe the last one was in 2005 just before I joined ASTH) and it will also be our first held on line. At the time of writing, the software is being loaded on to our web site and information on the ballot process and candidate profiles will be sent out to all eligible members shortly. The ballot will remain open until 5pm on 19 September. The ASTH Constitution states that each of our regions must be represented by at least one Councillor, consequently once votes have been counted, the successful candidates will be announced ensuring that this condition is fulfilled. The on line voting will be very easy and I hope that all members will take a few minutes to have a say in who will be their elected representatives for the next 2 years.

It's not too late to register for the Scientific Workshop. A registration form has been included in this newsletter

mail out or you can visit the ASTH web site. Please pass on information about the Workshop to your colleagues, particularly those attending the HAA meeting or based in South Australia. I will be on leave for the last two weeks in September so if you submit your registration then there will be a delay in processing it – best to do it now and get it in early! On my return I will, of course, acknowledge all registrations. There has been a good response to the new poster session and there will be a prize awarded to the best one.

Membership renewals were due on 1 July. Nearly 60% of members have already paid and there was also a great response to reminder notices which went out in mid August. If you've still not paid, please do so by 11 September.

You're probably sick of hearing me ask for contributions to the website – but if you do have anything of interest to report, if you've read an interesting article or if you're the first person to hear about a development in H&T – let me know and we can share it with the world!

Megan Sarson

CHALLENGES IN COAGULATION – A CASE-BASED EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP

All NSW haematology registrars in training and laboratory scientists interested in coagulation are invited to an inaugural ASTH teaching workshop, sponsored by Novo-Nordisk. Clinical and laboratory experts from Sydney teaching hospitals will present a case-based review of current coagulation practice and problem-solving.

The workshop will be held on Saturday, 26 September at the Mercure Hotel, George St in central Sydney. For further details and registration forms, please contact Traci Jo Barrett from Novo-Nordisk at tcjb@novonordisk.com. We see

this workshop as a great opportunity to share experiences and solutions to common problems, and provide our medical trainees and laboratory scientists with some focussed training in coagulation medicine.

The workshop will be particularly useful for registrars sitting the FRCPA examinations, and provide a refresher course for more senior staff. We thank Novo-Nordisk for their generous support of this one-day workshop and hope it will become a regular event in the haematology calendar.

ASTH SCIENTIFIC WORKSHOP 2009

This year's ASTH Workshop will be held on Saturday 17 October in the Hawke Centre, University of South Australia, City West Campus, North Terrace, Adelaide.

The program is finalised and can be viewed on the ASTH website. Registration forms are also available on the website. Registration includes morning and afternoon tea, lunch and a sundowner kindly sponsored by Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics. Registrations close on Friday 18 September.

This year we are having posters at the workshop. This is an opportunity for young scientists who have been working on something but not keen for an oral presentation. I have received a number of abstracts for posters already. If you are interested in making a poster, please send me an abstract. Closing date for posters is Friday 18 September. All posters are to be no more than 1m x 1m.

Look forward to seeing you at the workshop.

Grace Gilmore
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ISTH CONGRESS

Boston, Massachusetts USA, hosted the XXII Congress of ISTH which convened 11-16 July 2009.

Considered by many "clotting and bleeding" clinicians and scientists to be a premier meeting, there were more than 5,000 attendees from all continents. The meeting was jammed packed with numerous plenary sessions and State-of-Art lectures by current leaders in their respective fields, oral communications, and thousands of posters. As if this wasn't enough, the Congress included an Education Program for the first time, organised jointly by the Congress and the Scientific and Standardisation Committee "to provide attendees with an opportunity to broaden and deepen their knowledge of thrombosis and haemostasis." Therefore, it was of utmost importance to pace one self and be selective with what to attend to avoid mental burnout!

Andreas Greinacher delivered an excellent plenary talk on heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT) summarising the knowledge to date, as well as proposing a new concept in the immunology of HIT that the antibody directed at heparin/PF4 complex upon heparin treatment is misguided and as a result of prior exposure to PF4, perhaps induced by endogenous non-heparin factors such as bacteria.

It was pleasing to see several Australians flying the flag at the meeting. In particular, Professor Stephen Hogg delivered the Oscar Ratnoff Memorial Lecture on the *Contribution of Allosteric Disulfide Bonds to Regulation of Haemostasis* while Professor Shaun Jackson delivered the Marion Barnhart Memorial Lecture on *Modern Concepts of Platelet Activation*



Photos kindly supplied by Chris Ward.

During Thrombus Development. Both were well received. State of the Art Lectures from the Congress can be sourced from *Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis* Special Issue: State of the Art 2009; Vol 7 Issue s1:1-339.

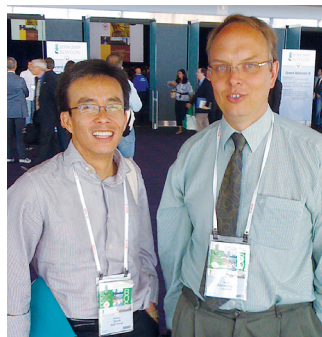
On the social side, Boston was beautiful in summer allowing visitors to savour not only in the history, but also the academics (Harvard and M.I.T),

culture, and sports. From the historic neighborhoods of Beacon Hill (where Senator John Kerry resides) and the North End, to the many museums (Museum of Fine Arts) and cultural attractions (Boston has the oldest library in USA), from Fenway Park (home of the Boston Red Sox) to the ivy-covered halls of Harvard, there was something for everyone who visits. Finally, we were also lucky that the meeting coincided with Boston's annual hosting the Tall Ships from around the world, in keeping with New England's maritime tradition.

Although some of us encountered some of the perils of travelling to and from the US, the meeting was a success providing the opportunity to get away from routine work to refresh oneself, to reacquaint with colleagues

and friends from around the world to discuss possible new collaborations while seeing "what's new" in our respective areas of interest.

The XXIII congress of ISTH will convene in Kyoto, Japan on 23-29 July 2011. I'm told that it's a beautiful city and surely many more Australians will attend if for no reasons other than because it will be much closer to home. Hope to see you there.



Mark Crowther (McMaster University, Hamilton) with Huyen Tran at Conference Centre.

Huyen Tran

UPCOMING MEETINGS

MEETING	WHERE/DATES	CONTACT
Australian Vascular Biology Society ASM	Canberra 10-13 September 2009	http://www.avbs.org/meet.html
Challenges in Coagulation	Sydney 26 September 2009	tcjb@novonordisk.com
2009 BSHT/UKHCDO Annual Meeting	Newcastle Upon Tyne 7-9 October 2009	www.bsht.org.uk/
AIMS 2009 National Scientific Meeting	Adelaide 12-16 October 2009	www.aims.org.au
ASTH Scientific Workshop 2009	Adelaide 17 October 2009	ASTH@bigpond.com grace.gilmore@health.wa.gov.au
HAA2009 Joint Annual Scientific Meeting HSA NZ/ANZBT/ASTH	Adelaide 18-21 October 2009	www.fcconventions.com.au/HAA2009/ Abstract submission closes 13 July 2009
APSTH-JSTH joint Symposium	Osaka, Japan 20-22 November 2009	http://www.jsth.org/apsth/information/0008.html
The American Society of Haematology 51st Annual Meeting	New Orleans 5-8 December 2009	www.hematology.org
20th Congress of the International Society for Fibrinolysis and Proteolysis	Amsterdam 24-28 August 2010	www.isfp2010.org