

PERTH 2009



Dr Barry McGuire, Chairman of the Local Organising Committee, welcomed delegates to the fantastic Perth Concert Hall, host of the 14th annual Difficult Airway Society Meeting. This year, record numbers of high quality abstracts were received, reflecting the increasing enthusiasm and popularity of this meeting. Speakers, both national and international, delivered outstanding presentations on an array of topics and stimulated enthusiastic discussion, ensuring that the meeting was worthwhile and appealing to everyone involved in airway management.



Day one started with the practical workshops. This year two workshop groups were run simultaneously. The main auditorium housed the *traditional* workshops, which gave delegates the opportunity to use a large variety of equipment and to link these skills to the 'real life' environment. There was an informative introductory lecture covering equipment and techniques and a station devoted to interactive scenario-based discussion. The second group participated in a *simulation* workshop, overseen by **Dr Simon Edgar**, demonstrating methods of incorporating simulation training into a variety of clinical areas. These included discussion on how delegates might use simulation in their training programmes; the formative assessment



of airway management competency using a 'sim-man'; and how simulation can play a role in human factors training. The workshops were a unanimous success thanks to the meticulous planning and efficiency of the workshop organisers **Dr Grant Rodney** and **Dr Alistair McDiarmid**.

The scientific programme began by examining the issues of managing the airway *outside* theatre. **Dr Thom Mort** updated us with the optimal management of patients in critical care including tracheal tube exchange and transfer of these high risk patients, whilst Dr **Dermot McKeown** gave a lively overview of training and management of the airway in the emergency room. **Dr Arndt Timmerman** ended this session with a review of airway management outside the hospital, considering current success rates and practices.

Dr Chris Frerk and **Dr Nikki Maran** then discussed how to improve safety and reduce risk in our airway management. They analysed the importance of non-technical skills during crisis management, why we do what we do, and how to reduce human error by identification of flaws and rehearsal of scenarios with simulation training. **Dr Andrew Smith** showed us how we can learn and change our own practice by the analysis and feedback of reported incidents and near misses.

The afternoon session began with oral presentations of free papers, the judging being chaired by **Dr Alistair McNarry**. This year boasted some excellent presentations with the winner of the oral presentation being Dr. M Roberts presenting a new method of assessing the airway. We would like to thank **Dr McNarry** and **Dr Grant Hutchinson** for their time and diligence in the huge task of reviewing all abstracts submitted.



The new SAM president, **Dr Elizabeth Behringer** ended the day with a witty and entertaining talk 'Video Laryngoscopy: does it make direct laryngoscopy



obsolete?', conveying that video laryngoscopes play a crucial role in airway management, with further studies needed to define their role. The session ended with an impromptu opportunity to quiz a panel of international experts about this topic.

Friday began bright and early with the novel Breakfast Club. An intimate setting with breakfast provided delegates access to a unique opportunity to directly 'pick the brains' of the experts in their field.

The morning session then began with **Dr Michael Kristensen** who presented a novel method of assessing the airway using ultrasonography, proving how easy it really is with a video of his son performing ultrasound on him and identifying all anatomical features! **Dr Tim Strang** then outlined the problems and difficulties in dealing with patients with or requiring stents in the airway, emphasising the importance of rigid bronchoscopy. **Dr Anil Patel** then shared his not insignificant experience and recommendations in dealing with the obstructed upper airway.

Dr John Henderson dealt with laryngoscopy: past, present and future, describing the evolution of tracheal intubation techniques from the rudimentary digital technique in the 1800's to laryngoscopes, fibreoptics, the LMA and Aintree catheter, and video-laryngoscopy. This was followed by a comprehensive review by **Dr Richard Cooper** of the perils of the extubation process and strategies to reduce risk.

The final session began with an overview of DAS news, a preliminary report of the National Audit Project, and ongoing DAS projects. A heated debate on the topic “Supraglottic airway devices will become a gold standard for airway control” ensued with a confident **Dr Anil Patel** supporting and a determined **Dr Richard Cooper** opposing the motion. Dr Tim Cook made the sensible suggestion that supraglottic airway devices are the gold standard in ‘some’ scenarios, but not all. Dr Cooper finally won the debate with a majority vote.

Following prize giving for poster winners, **Dr Chris Frerk**, the dynamic and enthusiastic Chairman of the Difficult Airway Society for many years graciously accepted the gift of a Quaich from the DAS Perth local organising committee and handed over the baton of new Chairperson to the charismatic **Dr Ellen O’Sullivan**.

This year the scientific programme had great topics as well as enthusiastic and learned speakers, and we would like to thank **Dr. David Ball** and **Dr Bernard Heidemann** for their organisation of this.

Perth provided a beautiful backdrop to the full social calendar, organised by **Dr Justine Nanson**. **Dr John Henderson** provided the authentic Scottish touch reciting the address ‘Tae a Haggis’, whilst delegates enjoyed the popular dish itself alongside champagne and canapés. The **Lord Provost** of Perth also made a guest appearance to cap off an enjoyable evening. The Gala dinner on Thursday evening was held at Perth Racecourse with an enjoyably busy timetable beginning with a cocktail reception, a beautiful three course meal, followed by outdoor fireworks over the racecourse itself on a fortuitously clear, but cold evening. Guest warmed up quickly, however, with Scottish country dancing instructed by the International Ceilidh Collective resulting in a busy dance floor and a lot of fun.



The Local Organising Committee would like to thank everyone who attended the meeting, those who submitted abstracts, all who contributed to the organisation and success of the meeting, and to all the sponsors and exhibitors who gave their support to this DAS meeting. A lot of hard work behind the scenes was also carried out by Dr Catriona Connolly (Trade), Dr Stephen Cole (Finance) and Dr Peter Coe (Accommodation and Transport).

We look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting in Cheltenham 2010.

Dr Corina Lee (DAS Perth)