

CCMAA meeting on September 6th 2014

Professor Martin Johnson (m. 1963) welcomed attendees after a general meeting of the society – for details of that see Minutes of steering group prepared by Dr Tom Turmezei (m. 1996). He also expressed the best wishes from the CCMAA to Tony Jewell and Chris McManus for a speedy recovery, and then handed over to Tim Heyman (m. 1980) to chair the first of several lively and interesting sessions (for biographies see [www.](#)). The first paper was a [presentation](#) by Dr Steve Bown (m. 1962) entitled Population, Sustainability and Global Health, in which Steve certainly alarmed by the many fascinating insights into population growth and its impact on the sustainability of our planet). His argument was that doctors, having created the problem by reducing mortality rates, had a responsibility for solving it by active promotion of birth control. His proposition generated lively discussion, some expressing the view that the evidence suggested that economic development was the strongest impetus to use of birth control: chicken or egg? Steve's talk was followed by a short [presentation](#) comparing aspects of healthcare in Canada and the UK by Eugene Wong (m. 2009), a clinical student sponsored by the CCMAA during his elective. His clear and logical presentation provided interesting insights into the relative value of the NHS, and he concluded that, despite their many similarities, the NHS (at least in its traditional form!) outperformed the Canadian health care system. The first session ended with some case presentations by Dr Tom Boyd (m. 1970), reprising by popular demand (in style but not in content) his presentations of cases of alleged medical negligence - initially given at the December 2013 meeting. Tom did not disappoint, engaging the whole audience in active discussion and decision making, with humour and flair. Could become a regular feature? Tom sent us buzzing off to tea!

After tea, Professor Theresa Marteau (Fellow) took the chair for our traditional debate, which started with a fascinating [presentation](#) from Dr Rashmi Patel (m. 2002) on The application of text mining to electronic health records as applied to mental health. This led neatly into the discussion on the pros and cons of the health service database with some helpful introductory comments from a panel of Mike Morgan (m. 1969), Mike Knapp (m. 1977) and Judith Allanson (m. 1980). There was general agreement that the potential value of linking GP's records to those of hospital data-bases was high. However, what emerged during the discussion was the concern about alarmingly poor handling of data management and confidentiality of hospital data up to now. The discussion led to three main concerns being expressed (1) that confidentiality/privacy was no longer a credible issue, given the commercially valuable personal data that mobile phone companies and internet providers already have about us and our health, (2) that GPs might lose the trust of their patients and/or might not make full records available, and (3) that the reaction of those in authority might be to apply such stringent conditions on accessing the data as to render it too difficult to use. The application of the model provided by Rashmi might manage many of problems raised by the latter two issues? Theresa started and ended the session by asking those present whether they had opted out, or intended to, of the GP data provision. About 40% of those present indicated they had at the outset and this did not shift with the debate!

We then had a short break before the final lecture of the day to allow the public to join us – a new feature of our meetings which was suggested by Jonathan Gillard and that we hope to extend to involve several sixth forms locally in the future. This first [public lecture](#) was introduced by Dr Andrew Sharkey (m. 1979) and was given by Prof Jim Smith FRS, FMedSci (m. 1973, Honorary Fellow) titled Driving human cell differentiation: lessons from the frog. Jim as ever, gave a clear and stimulating tour de force taking us by the hand through the molecular developmental biology of pluri-potency with such lucidity and enthusiasm that even several of the more traditional surgeons present said that they followed and understood! A great start to this new public outreach venture by the CMAA.

We then adjourned to drinks in the OCR followed by a magnificent dinner in hall, after which our speaker was Dr Ed Wild (m. 1996). Ed spoke both entertainingly and movingly about his work with Huntington's patients and their families, and about his co-founding of [HDBuzz](#), an online source of reliable, impartial, easy-to-understand information about HD research. HDBuzz is now the world's foremost HD research news source, in

recognition of which, Ed was awarded the 2012 Michael Wright Community Leadership Award by the [Huntington Society of Canada](#). He also told us about an exciting new clinical trial that attempts to lower Huntington levels. Dr Fazal Hasan (m. 1979) thanked Ed, the speakers and chairs, and the staff of the alumni office, the conference office and the kitchens for their wonderful support. The evening then continued informally until the wee hours. The following morning many of us met for coffee in the Master's Garden and admired the carp in the glorious autumn sun.

Another very stimulating and enjoyable occasion that managed to combine debate and looking forwards, with meeting old friends and making new ones, and with pleasant nostalgia. Photos from the event can be viewed on Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/christsalumnievents/sets/72157647391027176/>