

CCMAA newsletter Summer 2015

Welcome to this first newsletter. We look forward to hearing news from you to include in future issues!

The CCMAA webpages

We are pleased to introduce a re-organised and streamlined CCMAA webpage, to which you can navigate through the 'Groups' tab of the alumni website (<https://alumni.christs.cam.ac.uk/home>). If you haven't already registered, please do so here and take advantage of this new facility. There is information about the association, past and upcoming meetings (including minutes of the association and steering committee meetings), and a new private discussion area for CCMAA members where we can post on topics such as career advice, prize opportunities and any other such matters.

A CCMAA mailing list has been formalised with the Development Office, but this is not yet currently available through the website. If you have any news that you would like to circulate through this mailing list or any feedback on the webpages, please contact Tom Turmezei (tom@diagnosticradiology.eu).

The association is extremely grateful to the Development Office in helping to set up these enhanced facilities, in particular to Andrew Aistrup (m. 2010), until recently Development Assistant in the office.

Dates for your diaries of Future Meetings of possible interest

21st September 2015 (9.00-22.30): Inside-Outside: Challenges and Prejudices. A celebratory meeting and dinner to mark the retirement of Professor Martin Johnson from his University chair – for details and to book a place see <http://jillrogersassociates.co.uk/c/inside-outside.html>

8th or 9th December 2015 18.00-20.00 followed by dinner at a local restaurant: a winter evening meeting in London of the CCMAA at a venue and a date to be determined. Speakers will include Fiona Fox from the Science Media Centre and our own Mike Knapton (see below).

9th and 10th April 2016: the spring meeting of the CCMAA at Christ's. Speakers will include Tom Turmezei (m. 1996) and Sanjay Jariwala (m. 1990).

We want to hear from you (to mhj21@cam.ac.uk) with suggestions/volunteers for further speakers please!

4th February 2017: Joint CCMAA-CCMS meeting at Christ's

News Items

Mike Knapton spent an interesting afternoon recently, at the House of Lords, at the invitation of Baroness Illora Findley of Llandaff, discussing the Access to Palliative Care Bill (2015). It was interesting to see the Parliamentary process up close and understand in a bit more detail how the process works. Perhaps more interesting is the ethical and practical issues that end-of-life care raises – all rather topical subjects with new guidance from NICE being subjected to severe criticism, with the demise of the Liverpool Care Pathway, and with the Joffe, and more recently Faulkner, Assisted Suicide Bills proposing the introduction of medically assisted suicide. These themes will inform Mike's presentation at the coming winter meeting of CCMAA.

Six papers from Martin Johnson and Kay Elder launch a new journal edited by Sarah Franklin (fellow) and Martin Johnson (m. 1963): Reproductive BioMedicine and Society Online (RBMS) – see <http://www.rbmsociety.com/>. RBMS is a new international journal of humanities & reproduction. The journal accepts high quality original papers, reviews and commentaries on topics in the Social Sciences and Humanities concerning Reproductive BioScience and Medicine. The subject areas of interest include Politics, Sociology and Social Policy, Philosophy, Anthropology, the visual and literary Arts, History, Ethics and Law related to Reproductive BioMedicine.

The opening symposium covers one of the most significant collaborations between a clinician and a scientist in the history of medical science, which was initiated in 1968 by the reproductive physiologist and experimental embryologist Robert Edwards from Cambridge University and the Oldham-based NHS consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, Patrick Steptoe, who at the time was already a laparoscopy pioneer. Their teamwork led to the birth at the Oldham and District General Hospital of the first in-vitro fertilization (IVF) baby, Louise Brown, in the summer of 1978, after years of intense studies, insistent and methodical modifications to protocols and numerous attempts at achieving an IVF pregnancy. In 2010–2011, laboratory notebooks and some loose papers kept by Bob Edwards and his assistant Jean Purdy were found in an outbuilding at the farm where Edwards lived. Then in 2012 a set of complementary notebooks was found in the basement of the manor building at Bourn Hall. Elder and Johnson studied these notebooks, as well as the hundreds of loose pieces of paper, to assemble by a record of the programme of clinical research undertaken between 1969 and 1978 by the IVF team. The research on this new information, combined with attempts at verification of their findings through interviews with eyewitnesses and extensive archival research, has produced an in-depth account of the Oldham days presented in a series of six informative papers published as a Symposium in the first issue of *RBMS*.

These papers describe in detail the documents, the actual patient treatment attempts, changes in protocols, and ethical quandaries of the team. They also reveal the critical role of the unassuming third collaborator, Jean Purdy, whose contributions were largely underestimated in the past. Jean Purdy was not only a staunch supporter of Bob Edwards in many ways, she systematically annotated the experimental treatment and other data, prepared the culture media and equipment, coordinated the various strands of early IVF attempts, and ran the

laboratories. The larger than expected number of unsuccessful cycles – 457 cycles involving 282 patients – prior to the first successful human IVF raises the important question of how the ethical dilemmas of early IVF were navigated. While many questions cannot be answered, even with the benefit of additional data, a consistent picture of painstaking efforts to ensure patient volunteers were treated ethically emerges from these accounts. The research conducted by Elder and Johnson allows us to see more clearly than ever before how these challenges were navigated. Their analysis also reveals a previously unknown source of the crucial philanthropic funding that supported the development of IVF in Oldham and Cambridge. Lillian Lincoln Howell (1921–2014), a Californian heiress, contributed generous sums – estimated to be a minimum of \$95,000.00 – over the course of 10 years, from 1968 to 1978. This sum, equivalent in today's terms to nearly half a million pounds, may well have made the difference between successful IVF and a project that was abandoned due to lack of financial support. Edwards, Purdy and Steptoe were far ahead of their time in predicting the importance of their discoveries to future generations, and the work of Elder and Johnson unequivocally brings this message home.

Report on Joint meeting of CCMS/CCMAA: 7th March 2015 in Christ's College

Another very successful second joint meeting between CCMS and CCMAA kicked off at 14.00 with welcomes from the two Presidents: Sarah Choi (of CCMS; m. 2012) and Martin Johnson (of CCMAA; m. 1963). This was followed by a presentation of the new interactive CCMAA webpage that Tom Turmezei (secretary CCMAA; m. 1996) is developing with Andrew Aistrup (m. 2010; alumni office). Tom also reported that at the committee meeting earlier in the day it had been agreed to follow next year's CCMAA meeting on **April 9th and 10th 2016** by a third joint meeting to be held on **28th January 2017**. It was also affirmed that members of CCMS were welcome to attend the CCMAA meetings and that the CCMAA fund would support their attendance financially.

Sarah Franklin (Fellow) then took the chair for the first part of this meeting on the subject ***“Focus on career progression”***, in which three alumni spoke about the influences that shaped their varied career progressions: what helped and how, the mistakes made and how they learnt from them, and what difficulties they have encountered and overcome. First off was Jonathan Gillard (Director of Clinical Studies), who described how he reached his present position in academic medicine: having a rolling and flexible 7-year plan was a key feature of his experience. Then Judith Allanson (m. 1980) spoke about her experiences that led her to her current post as Consultant in Neurorehabilitation and Clinical lead for the Evelyn Community Head Injury Service and inpatient rehabilitation service at Addenbrooke's. She stressed the importance of following your interests and passions in a demanding job like medicine, if your enthusiasm and energy are not to flag. Finally, and because both Mike Knapton and Sanjay Jariwalla had last minute family illnesses that prevented them from coming, Tony Jewell (m. 1969) stepped in to fill the gap, and gave an account of the enduring importance that his ethical perspective had had in shaping his career. Three very different and illuminating accounts, for which our warmest thanks were expressed.

After the tea break, we adjourned to mixed groups of alumni and students to further discuss what made for a successful career progression. These were led by the students, one of whom from each group reported back in plenary afterwards on the factors that they had discussed and identified as being important for their future career progressions. Tom Turmezei led this plenary session, during which the factors identified included: protecting your physical and mental health; having a range of experiences both clinically and socially; maintaining a good work-life balance; being adaptable; having good mentoring and/or support and working **with** colleagues; having autonomy and clarity of role. The day ended very convivially with drinks followed by dinner in the OCR. Photos of the event can be viewed [here](#).

Let us have your news items for the forthcoming news letters!