



Commonwealth Association for Paediatric Gastroenterology & Nutrition

REPORT

CAPGAN Conference, London 2011

CAPGAN held its Silver Jubilee Conference in July 2011 in the Institute of Child Health, University College, London.

Registrants were welcomed on the 21st July evening by the Commonwealth Secretariat at its seat, Marlborough House. They were entertained with violin music, singing and brief speeches of welcome; and offered drinks and an excellent buffet supper.

The conference papers were presented and posters displayed at ICH over the next 2 days, 22nd and 23rd July.

Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe, Chief Executive of Universities UK, welcomed CAPGAN to the House of Lords for the CAPGAN Dinner on the evening of 22nd July.

All events were very fully attended and lively discussion occurred throughout.

Organisation

Having decided to have the conference in 2011 in London, an organising committee was convened. A few meetings followed but most of the work was done using Skype by a Core Committee, a Programme Committee, an Abstracts Committee and a Social Committee. Several other persons were willingly recruited including the President's husband, a website manager, colleagues and students to help on the spot and also, an administrator/secretary. All were invaluable and due much gratitude (names below).

Finances

From the outset, it was understood that all Conference expenses and membership fees had to be covered by conference registration fees and ethical sponsorship. This was achieved. Fees were set at £180-300 depending on career grade and country. Relatively low cost

programmes, badges and conference bags etc were provided. Sponsors included Nutriset (Malaunay, France) and BSPGHAN, who awarded sufficient for, respectively, 12 and 4 generous scholarships to overseas delegates without sufficient means to cover the considerable expense of attending the conference. Professor Walker-Smith also provided a scholarship for a trainee from Australia. All of these delegates were chosen, based on the quality of their submitted abstracts, by the Abstracts Committee. In the event, Prof Walker-Smith's scholarship was given to a Sri Lankan presenter, there being none suitable from Australia. Other generous sponsors were the Commonwealth Secretariat and Ferring Pharmaceuticals. John Wiley & Sons and Wolters Kluwer Health Medical Research also paid for advertising opportunities. At the Conference, itself, a panel judged the standard of presentations and a prize of £500 was donated and presented by Prof Sandhu to the best presenter.

(Detailed Financial Report to follow.)

Accommodation

The Institute of Child Health lived up to its very good reputation as a conference venue. It provided 1 large and 1 smaller well equipped and manned lecture theatres, room and boards for posters and space, tables and chairs for registration, lunches, mingling and more serious discussion. The only minor flaw was due to a fault in that internet connection was unavailable within our confines throughout the conference.

Most delegates were accommodated very conveniently at International Hall (University of London student accommodation) and the Goodenough Club. Free internet connections were available and they both provided excellent value, with no downsides reported.

Social Programme

This was planned to include guided walks and visits but, apart from the fixed evening entertainment, these were not offered as the scientific programme did not allow sufficient time. Instead, delegates were given leaflets on 'things to do in London' and advice as necessary, eg to travel using Oyster Cards.

Scientific Programme

There were 18 well attended guest lectures, from recent scientific advances in hepatitis to practical management of severe malnutrition to advocacy and the MDGs. They evoked much discussion within and beyond the lecture theatres. The excellent final lecture, on

academic medicine's responsibility for global health, was very kindly given by Professor Sir David Weatherall, as he had to be invited at the last minute.

Approximately 70 abstracts were submitted and scored by the Abstracts Committee: 64 were accepted and 20 were presented orally. More were worthy of presentation. Again, they evoked much discussion. The remaining 44 were displayed as posters and there were 2 poster walks. In retrospect, another half day's conference would have made life easier by allowing more time to present and discuss more research.

The Delegates

CAPGAN members number 382 at present. Of these, 135 attended CAPGAN 2011 and all were offered Certificates of Attendance. Several more wished to attend but were unable to obtain their visas in time. Surprisingly, Bangladeshi delegates were very numerous but no-one from Canada attended. Otherwise, there were delegates from several subSaharan African countries, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Jamaica, Australia, also non-Commonwealth countries like Egypt, Denmark and the USA. They all contributed greatly to a short-lived but memorable, enjoyable and remarkably problem-free conference.

Annual General Meeting

This was held on the last afternoon and there was limited time for a busy Agenda. The organisers, the students and others who helped at the conference itself, and CAPGAN's administrator and also the outgoing President were thanked while the incoming President, Professor Tahmeed Ahmed, was welcomed. Dr Susan Hill became Treasurer and Dr Barbara Golden, Secretary of CAPGAN. Dr Eva Forbes (UK) was awarded the Professor Sandhu prize for the best presentation and Dr Shaman Rajindrajith (Sri Lanka) was awarded the Professor Walker-Smith scholarship.

Other scholarship awardees were as follows:

Nutriset Scholarships:

Bangladesh - Drs M. Chisti, Md.I. Hosain, R. Sabuktagin, F. Tofail, S. Huq, J. Hamadani;
Jamaica - Prof T. Forrester; India - Dr N. Mohan; Pakistan - Prof Z. Bhutta; Malawi - Dr I. Trehan; Malawi - Dr T. Phiri; Kenya - Dr V Bandika

BSPGHAN Scholarships:

Bangladesh – Dr S. Roy, W. Khatun, D. Sarker, S. Thakur

