

SAS Ophthalmic Update Workshops

Report by: Sofia Rokenya, MBBS, MRCOphth, FRCSI, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.
Date: 23-24th September, 2011.
Venue: Hilton Hotel, East Midland Airport, Derby, UK.
Date: 15th October 2011.
Venue: Marriott Hotel, Leicester, UK.

The SAS community is comprised of staff grades, associate specialists and the newer speciality doctors, who, although deemed to be the backbone of the NHS, often remain marginalised and under-represented. It is highly encouraging to see efforts being made to change this trend. Our hats go off to Mr Manu Mathew, Regional Advisor and SAS tutor for East Midlands, Royal College of Ophthalmologists, and Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, Chesterfield Royal NHS Foundation Trust, who is working in collaboration with the East Midlands Deanery and the trust to help mobilise the funds allocated by the Department of Health, towards Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for SAS doctors and their trainers. These educational workshops are a reflection of one of the many endeavours that are being made in this direction.

The September weekend educational update was arranged at the Hilton Hotel in Derby. A warm welcome of tea, coffee, refreshments and a housekeeping brief led on to a session dedicated to medical retina. Age-related macular degeneration, retinal vein occlusion, diabetic macular oedema, anti-VEGFs and their alternatives were discussed. Furthermore, service needs and funding strategies for intravitreal therapy were addressed. The notable speakers for this session were Mr Manu Mathew and Miss Ajimoko from Chesterfield, Mr Paul Tesha from Lincoln and Mr WM Amoaku from Nottingham. Later, there was hands-on training in the intravitreal injection of dexamethasone implants (Ozurdex) in animal eyes. It is noteworthy that this therapy is now approved by the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) for the management of retinal vein occlusion in the UK. The afternoon's education was geared towards the anterior segment. Issues pertaining to ocular surface disease due to long-term use of topical antiglaucoma medications and their preservatives were highlighted by Mr Mohammad from Birmingham. Mr Hossain of Southampton talked about the management of corneal ulcers and Mr Amoaku took to the podium with an update on the use of immunosuppressives in uveitis and scleritis. Mr Mathew spoke about dry



eyes. This was followed by a demonstration on a new tear osmolarity testing device, refreshing the concept of hyperosmolality and its use in the diagnosis and grading of dry eyes.

Dinner was the social highlight, when the doctors sat together and enjoyed delicacies from the hotel restaurant and the conversation covered everything under the sun from medicine to media.

On Saturday morning, Lynn Millbank nailed the ins and outs of biometry, addressing the modern day challenges of intraocular lense (IOL) power refinement. Most of us found her input very useful, as nowadays the increasing influx of patients undergoing refractive surgery and vitreoretinal procedures, plus high expectations for the outcome of cataract surgery, make the knowledge and application of biometrical twists mandatory.

Prof Ian Rennie from Sheffield spoke about ocular tumours and later Dr Peter Good from Birmingham & Midlands Eye Centre lectured on the technique of imaging and analysis in ultrasound and ultrasound biomicroscopy (UBM). The afternoon was dedicated to hands-on practice in biometry, ultrasound and UBM machines.

Sunny Saturday of 15th October saw another workshop for SAS ophthalmic doctors. The venue this time was the Marriot Hotel, Leicester. Mr Manu Mathew from Chesterfield was the opening speaker. He talked about principles of lasers and biometry in cataract surgery. This was followed by a lecture by Mr Larry Benjamin, Chairman, Education committee, Royal College of Ophthalmologists and Consultant Ophthalmologist, Stoke Mandeville Hospital,

on 'Decision-making for intraocular lens power in difficult situations'. Mr Benjamin further talked about the modern day management of diabetic maculopathy.

After a top-up of coffee and tea the group rejoined for case studies of ocular tumours and other suspicious lesions plus the role of photodynamic therapy, by Mr Paul Rundle of Sheffield. Glaucoma input comprised of 'Selective laser trabeculoplasty' by Manu Mathew and 'Trab versus tubes' by Mr Keith Barton, Glaucoma Service Training Director, Moorfields Eye Hospital, London. Lunch was served in the main dining hall at the hotel. The afternoon was dedicated to exposure to the technical armamentarium, which has become an integral part of cutting edge ophthalmology today. There was plenty of opportunity for hands-on experience with optical biometry and UBM machines.

Overall, these were excellent educational and skill updates. There was plenty of audience interaction and participation. Moreover, the courses were free of charge for SAS doctors. We look forward to seeing more workshops like these in the future. ●

Forthcoming event

East Midlands SAS Conference is due to take place on Friday 20th January, 2012 at East Midlands Hilton Hotel (all day event). Registration is free and on a first come first served basis. It is accredited for six CPD points. The topics will be generic and relate to all SAS doctors. They include appraisal and revalidation, job planning and CESR application - update. For further details, please contact Mr Manu Mathew: manu.mathew@chesterfieldroyal.nhs.uk