

Association of Clinical Electron Microscopists

Minutes of the AGM, 3rd July 2003, Bristol

The meeting was opened at 4.15 pm by the ACEM Chairman, Brian Eyden, who thanked all the speakers who had given presentations at the preceding scientific meeting

There were no apologies for absence.

The minutes of the previous AGM had been circulated and were accepted as a true record.

Election of Chairman

Brian Eyden had said he would like to step down from the position of ACEM Chairman, which he has held since its establishment in 1999. He felt it was time to make room for someone else.

Tim Ryder had signified his willingness to take on this role and was elected unanimously. He will take over as chairman from the end of the meeting.

Election of Meetings Organiser

Bart Wagner had said he would like someone else to take this on as he has organised all the meetings so far.

There were no volunteers, so BW, AC and BE agreed to jointly make a start on the organisation of the next meeting.

Election of Secretary

Jill Sparke will be retiring at the end of March 2004.

There were no volunteers to take over, but it was hoped one could be found nearer the time.

Treasurer's report

AC distributed copies of the Statement of Accounts as of 24th June 2003, which he pointed out were not professionally audited.

The income stream from the annual membership fee should allow us to offer to pay expenses for speakers etc.

After numerous hurdles the on-line banking should soon be working.

Report from Jilly Moss on HCS and FHCS

JM has for the last 3 years been going to meetings for the numerous new Government initiatives and has been doing all she can to increase their awareness of Electron Microscopists.

We are all very grateful that BW instigated the formation of ACEM just in time for it to become recognised as a Professional Body representing people with specialist skills.

ACEM has been accepted at meetings of FHCS, NOS, IBMS, ACS and HPC.

It is acknowledged that it is a relatively small body and has so far not been asked for financial contribution.

With the NOS, Electron Microscopy has been recognised as a specific discipline; Tim Ryder has been active in the drawing up of the NOS standards for EM.

It will be very important in the future that we have a training program in place. Val James and BW are working on this.

The HPC launch has been postponed to 9th July 2003.

Under its predecessor, CPSM, assessment, certification and registration were all carried out by the same body, the CPSM.

Under the HPC, certification of competency will be by the relevant professional body.

Hopefully, ACEM will be able to do this in the future.

Under HPC, there will be protected titles...e.g. Biomedical Scientist and a person will have to be registered with HPC to use that title.

With the change from CPSM to HPC, the annual Registration fee has gone up from £17 to a proposed £65.

HPC is hoping to evaluate the assessment process...When? How? And How often will the assessment be needed.

The Government have funded an initiative called "Reflective Thinking and Outcomes".

This has been piloted in 55 institutions and found to be a waste of time. They are spending more money to amend it.

Ian Shore and JM are representing ACEM in the development of the Proof of Competence scheme. HPC hopes to bring in something on this in 3 years.

ACEM has been invited and listened to and we must maintain our raised profile; we need to be in on the decision-making.

On FHCS, ACEM is a specialist subdivision, not part of IBMS or ACS.

There is a grandparenting scheme for Clinical Scientists in Electron Microscopy wishing to register with HPC, but they must have been in post for 6 years for Electron Microscopy, (as opposed to 3 years for other modalities), because EM does not have a formal training scheme.

There is no modality for Electron Microscopy, this requires recognition by the Privy Council.

Caroline Sewry, Louise Anderson and Jill Moss are involved with application for HPC registration via ACS. It is very important that we don't get left out. Please would anyone else in a similar position contact JM at work, or ACEM via the website.

Brian Eyden said we already have appraisals and CPD. There seemed to be a danger of over assessment, which would be time consuming.

James Ito pointed out that for years there had been rules for dealing with incompetency; now we are all required to prove our competency.

It was suggested that we might try to follow the same format as the first meeting, when the presentations started after lunch on one day and finished at lunch time the following day. This has the advantage of allowing the evening for the AGM and discussions between members. However this might require registration with Path Soc for 2 days...an expense to be avoided if possible. An alternative would be to have the scientific meeting on one day, but have the AGM the previous evening and possibly an informal dinner.

People were asked to think about the options and tell the committee.

There was support in principle for a second meeting during the year, probably in London, but as the Path Soc satellite meeting will be in Amsterdam in 2004, which entails additional expense and time for most of us, it was felt better to leave this till after the Amsterdam meeting and then see what support there was.

Website news

Liz Curtis as Webmaster gave a presentation of developments.

Total visitor numbers to the site are rising steadily and averaged 355 per month, most visitors visiting the site more than once. The most popular non-members' pages were "renal biopsies", "nemaline myopathy" and "what is a biopsy?"

There are currently 56 members with access to the members' area of the site.

Jeol have generously agreed to sponsor the website and are funding the secure online banking service for the site. This will soon be operational. Members will automatically receive a reminder one month before their annual membership expires and they can choose to pay securely online.

The ACEM database. The structure for this is now in place. Images and text can be put up, initially by the specialist subject co-ordinators, but later this will be available to all members. When an image is uploaded to the database, the moderator is automatically alerted. The moderator can choose to accept or delete the image, and the accompanying legend can also be edited or returned to the originator for further information. Once the entry has been approved it will be accessible by the members and cannot be altered.

We are developing a database of useful links. Please send the webmaster any specialist links that you think might be useful.

All members have access to their own details on the ACEM database. Please make sure these are correct and in particular keep email addresses up to date as they are used to contact members.

All important new information re issues such as NOS will be posted on the Members' area.

Web user names and passwords will be sent by post as it is more secure than email.

Lastly, is there anything wrong with the forums as they are not being used much?

Possibility of reduced subscription to Ultrastructural Pathology

BW had wondered if ACEM could negotiate a reduced subscription rate and after informal discussion it was suggested the ACEM secretary should write to the Editor and ask if this would be possible. The reply eventually came saying the editors would

National Occupation Standards

Tim Ryder said the NOS program was a 4year, multi million pound project designed to establish national benchmarks in 54 disciplines, Electron Microscopy being one of them. Last year, in Stage 1, the draft generic and discipline-specific standards were completed. In Stage 2, these standards were field tested, responses collated and minor revisions made. Stage 3 was Assessment Guidance, in which 3 day workshops were held to work out how performance would be assessed against the NOS. Tim Ryder, Liz Curtis, Val James and James Ito attended one of these workshops.

In autumn 2003 the NOS assessments should be piloted in the workplace. The NOS need to be dovetailed into training programs. We need to start gathering material in different areas, for the ACEM training program, although details of the format have yet to be decided. This material will be dual purpose in that it is also intended to be a general resource as well as training material. Our training scheme will have to be approved by the Privy Council.

It is important to get feedback re the draft NOS...easily done via the website

The RCPATH is not specifically involved in the EM NOS

Development of the Training Program.

Val James said this was still at an early stage. It was difficult to proceed far until the NOS for Electron Microscopy had been established. One aspect she felt had been omitted from the draft NOS was how to set about the diagnostic evaluation of an EM specimen.

She also felt it was important that we did not lose the knowledge of older, retiring electron microscopists.

Co-ordinators / advisors for most sections of the database were being established but Neuropath/CNS was still a problem.

We need a uniform format for the training material from the beginning and instructions as to how to get the items onto the website.

There was discussion as to whether we should wait until there was a reasonable bulk of material before putting anything up, or whether it was better to put up items as they were ready. Would it be a good idea to set a deadline or could that be a two-edged sword?

Adoption of ACEM Constitution

As a professional body we needed a constitution.

Tim Ryder had drafted one and put it on the web site for comment.

As there were no objections it was proposed and passed that we accept this constitution.

Tim Ryder was thanked for his hard work in preparing the draft.

The next Scientific Meeting

The 2004 annual meeting of the Path Soc will be in Amsterdam.

There was agreement from those present that ACEM should still have our next meeting as a satellite meeting to the Path Soc meeting.

recommend that ACEM become affiliated with the journal and its members would then get the same offer as members of the Society for Ultrastructural Pathology, i.e. a reduction of 45% on the personal subscription rate.

Brian Eyden said this was really a question of affiliation and he would much prefer that we stay with Path Soc, with which we hold our annual scientific meeting and Diagnostic Pathology, which had already published a group of articles about Diagnostic Electron Microscopy, written by ACEM members.

It was suggested that Path Soc could be asked if they would publish abstracts of the presentations at the ACEM satellite meeting as they do for the main meeting.

Jill Moss agreed to approach the President of Path Soc and the Editor of J Path to see what links could be arranged.

As time had run out the meeting was closed at 5.30pm

Bart Wagner was thanked for organising such an interesting and stimulating day.

The next AGM will be in 2004 in Amsterdam. The date of the next committee meeting is to be arranged.

