



## BRITISH ASSOCIATION *of* HEAD & NECK ONCOLOGISTS

### Newsletter – Autumn 2014

#### *Letter from the President Paul Pracy*



Another year has passed and once again we await the publication of this year's round of Surgeon Level Reporting. Unfortunately, this seems to have been as painful a process as the first year. I assure you that we have made significant representation to HQIP, from the outset, that the data we are able to provide through DAHNO is not helpful or even terribly informative. The data is not risk adjusted and the case numbers are so low in most cases that no meaningful conclusions can be drawn. In addition, it is not possible to provide simplistic end points for evaluation as the outcomes for our patients are far from straightforward and comparison between surgeons are almost impossible given the variability of case mix and the influence of comorbidity. Many of our outcomes may also be influenced by the input of other specialities including Anaesthetics, Intensive Care and Nursing. Looking forward, there may be some improvement as BAPRAS are in the process of developing a national database of reconstructive procedures. This is under development with the input of BAHNO as well as the speciality Associations. It is hoped that this will allow for better comparison of pedicled and free flap outcomes. Although the database will be administered through BAPRAS, there will be open access to allow non-plastic surgeons to record their data. I can also report that there is a growing understanding at HQIP, that the outcome data would have more relevance if it were published at the level of the units/MDT rather than being Surgeon specific. Whether this will come to something or not remains to be seen as the whole process remains in the hands of Whitehall. The publication date has been a moveable feast, seemingly as though Mr Hunt moves his pieces around the board until they line up in the most favourable position for him and his department.

The contract for the funding of DAHNO is due for review in the next few weeks and it looks as though a major change in the provision of the audit is likely. The audit has been hosted by the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) since it started but they withdrew from the process a few hours before the deadline due to some internal political issues. This has left a single bid in the process (a collaboration between Saving Faces and Dendrite). While I'm sure this will be a strong bid, there remains a risk that the central funding could be lost to Head and Neck and moved to fund an audit in another speciality. The outcome of the evaluation process should be known by the middle of December and the new audit up and running within 3-6 months.

This year also saw the European Head and Neck Society meeting held in Britain for the first time. The meeting in Liverpool was held jointly with BAHNO. In spite of some initial teething problems around how the collaboration would work, the meeting turned out to be a huge success for both EHNS and BAHNO. There were a large number of delegates from all over the world, the quality of the presentations and the level of debate was extremely high and the equal of any H&N meeting that I have attended. Compromises had to be made to try and fit the format of our usual Friday annual meeting into the format of the EHNS meeting, but I feel this was successful and we were able to have the Blair Hesketh lecture and our debate as usual.



*Joint EHNS & BAHNO meeting  
– Liverpool waterfront*

Finally, it was a pleasure to represent BAHNO in the 'Parade of Nations' which formed a focal point

for the 5th World Congress of IFHNOS in New York at the end of July.

This meeting was held jointly with the American Head and Neck Society and was also to celebrate the centenary of the H&N service at MSK. The word extravaganza barely does justice to the meeting,



*IFNOS – Parade of Nations  
Mike Fardy, Helen Cocks,  
Sat Parmar and Paul Pracy*

which opened with the Olympic style parade of nations, followed by a filmed address from Bill Clinton and an outstanding personal testament from Michael Douglas. The meeting was heavily oversubscribed, and as a result it was often impossible to get a seat (or on occasion, even entry) for some of

the sessions. However, it was great to see so many colleagues from the UK and the presentations were of an impressive standard. New York was as vibrant and beguiling as one would expect and for me was the perfect back drop to a fascinating meeting.

## **BAHNO Annual Scientific Meeting 2015 Ricard Simo – 24th April 2015**

The BAHNO meeting for 2015 will be back at its usual place at the Royal College of Physicians of London on Friday 24th of April 2015. The theme of this year's meeting will be based around Outcomes and Data in Head and Neck Surgery.

The programme will follow the usual format with two sessions of free papers, one in the morning and one in the afternoon together with the DAHNO and NCRI reports.

Professor Ben Bridgewater will address the meeting first thing in the morning to set the scene with a lecture on 'Surgery, Transparency and the NHS'.

The BAHNO memorial lecture will be given by Professor Vincent Gregoire from Belgium on the "Optimal management of recurrent head and neck cancer".

This will be followed by a round table on the management of recurrence in head and neck cancer. This will be chaired by Professor Vincent Gregoire and the panellists will be Dr Mehmet Sen, Ms Sarah Orr, Professor Rob George and Professor Hisham Mehanna which will be no doubt very stimulating.

In the afternoon, one of the most popular sections of the meeting "The debate" will take place at its usual time. This year's debate will be titled "This house believes that the publication of clinician level

data outcome data is of proven benefit in improving the quality of patient care in Head and Neck Cancer". For the motion will present Mr Ian Martin and Professor Tony Narula and against the motion Ms Anita Hazari and Mr David Chadwick and we hope it would be as entertaining as it has been in the previous years.

As usual, we would remind all presenters of oral presentations and posters, the need to register. Full details of the meeting will be shortly available in our website. [www.bahno.org.uk](http://www.bahno.org.uk)

We would encourage everyone on the Multidisciplinary teams to attend from Consultants, trainees and Allied Health Professionals.

We look forward to seeing you all on the 24th of April in London.

## **Richard Wight DAHNO Audit Lead**

Can I thank all BAHNO members who actively contributed submissions to the 9th annual report released in July. The report can be accessed at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/headandneck> with a main electronic document containing hyperlinks to support readers requiring more detailed trust and extended information tables. This format has had positive feedback from users.

Universal submission occurred from all trusts delivering head and neck cancer care in England and Wales, with further improvements in data quality. MDT's should be congratulated but their remains a divide between organisations making comprehensive submissions and those with significant gaps.

For the first time an overview of case mix variance with confidence intervals has been provided and this will inform future risk modelling. Of interest is only one cancer network fell outside the confidence limits for each of age at diagnosis, late stage and poor performance status. This suggests despite previous doctrine that these factors may have limited discriminatory capability. Co-morbidity and deprivation appeared more useful comparators. If we are to achieve case-mix adjustment it is important that all MDT's seek to provide these variables.

The "spidergram" visual representation of multi-professional care combining seven elements of the patient pathway, has received praise from clinicians and patients alike and remains a first in audit reporting. It is pleasing also to see a more detailed assurance of care across multi-professionals.

The initial fledgling reporting of IMRT usage and improved combination with radiotherapy data acts as an early window on immense opportunities in combining information sources to enrich treatment data and outcomes.

BAHNO continues to welcome proposals from SpR's with a consultant sponsor, to utilise aspects of the 45,000 cases collated so far. Drop us a line

expressing an interest and an outline methodology and we will see how we can help!

The collection year for the 10th Annual report **draws to a close on the 21st November 2014**. There has been the opportunity for the first time to submit data on HPV status in oropharynx, on holistic needs assessment within six months of diagnosis (eg patient care inventory), as well as the necessary fields to support the next period of the Cancer Outcomes Programme COP (surgeon level reporting). As previously members will be able to supplement their data and check submissions to a timetable to be announced in the New Year.

The second COP report is due for release on 17th November and BAHNO remains committed to supporting this initiative. The report will be linked to NHS Choices and an improved more visual searchable format has been developed.

## BAHNO Research Update – Hisham Mehanna

It is an exciting time for research in head and neck, and there have been a lot of big developments in the past six months.

I am very pleased to announce that Professor Richard Shaw (Liverpool) has been appointed as the Associate Director – Lead for Surgery of the National Cancer Research Institute. As you know Richard has an impressive academic record and I am sure will give us a strong voice for surgical research within the NCRI.

I am also very pleased to inform you that we have three new national randomised controlled studies currently in set up. Uniquely they will heavily involve both surgeons and clinical oncologists. The first of these is PATHOS [led by Mererid Evans, Cardiff], looking at the role of transoral surgery and radiotherapy in the management of low risk oropharyngeal cancer patients. The second is CompARE [led by me from Birmingham], which aims to look at the role of three different treatments – transoral surgery plus chemoradiotherapy; induction chemotherapy and dose – escalated CRT in the management of intermediate and high risk oropharyngeal cancers. These two studies are very complimentary and are an excellent opportunity for all the MDT to participate in research. In addition, DARS is also currently in set up and is looking at the feasibility and efficacy of sparing constrictors using IMRT to improve swallowing.

NIMRAD - led by Nick Slevin, Manchester – has started recruiting. It is looking at the role of Nimarazole as a hypoxia modifier in patients who are not fit for chemotherapy, and will provide important options for those patients over 70 or unfit who currently usually receive RT alone.

Finally, Head and Neck 5000 led by Andy Ness and Steve Thomas, Bristol, has reached its recruitment target of 5000 patients. This is an amazing milestone in research in head and neck

and they are to be congratulated on this excellent achievement. The study will continue recruiting to the end of 2014 and the team are currently considering applying for an extension for a further year's recruitment.

If you wish to participate or learn more about any of these studies please contact Jill, our BAHNO administrator who will put you in touch with the relevant teams.

## BAHNO Travel Grant 2014 – Report of visit – Dr Dorothy Gujral

Clinical observership at University Medical Centre (UMC) Utrecht, Netherlands – 5-15 May 2014

I would like to thank BAHNO for awarding me this fellowship. The objective of this project was to gain experience in image-guided radiotherapy (IGRT) implementation, to learn more about functional imaging in the treatment of head and neck cancers, and to gain more experience in the use of advanced radiotherapy techniques to reduce complications of therapy for head and neck cancer, with a view to integrating these aspects into clinical practice. Specifically, I am interested in radiotherapy planning on an MRI-linear accelerator and its clinical applications.

I was fortunate enough to be able to visit the head and neck unit at UMC Utrecht for 2 weeks under the supervision of Dr Chris Terhaard. The staff were very friendly and accommodating. During my visit, I spent time with the head and neck radiation oncologists, attending clinics, MDTs, and reviewing radiotherapy contours and plans. I was able to sit in on new patient consultations and experience their treatment pathway. I joined the head and neck contouring sessions and attended sessions where contours and plans were reviewed, with the opportunity to discuss intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) plans and image-guided protocols. I was able to spend time with the physicists to review imaging fusion protocols (PET-CT and MRI). This experience provided insight on implementation of IGRT into the patient's treatment pathway and some idea on how it impacts on treatment outcomes (toxicities and locoregional control).

I was also able to review the treatment pathway for dose-escalation with integration of functional imaging (PET-CT and MRI) and review IMRT plans for primary radiotherapy and re-irradiation cases. I reviewed examples of contours based on biological target volume using functional imaging (such as MRI (dynamic contrast-enhanced- and diffusion weighted-MRI) and FDG-PET).

I was fortunate enough to see the institution's prototype MRI-linac and spend time with the MRI physicists and researchers involved in its development, set-up and discuss issues around quality assurance and adaptive radiotherapy planning.

I will use this experience to expand on an image-guided adaptive radiotherapy protocol for the treatment of head and neck cancer at the Royal Marsden Hospital that has recently been implemented and consider dose-escalation strategies using biologically adaptive IMRT. Experience of advanced radiotherapy techniques such as IMRT and IGRT will be invaluable in the management of head and neck tumours.

I am currently involved in the design of a phase 3 randomised study of carotid-sparing IMRT for early larynx cancer and I hope these experiences will help set up a feasible adaptive radiotherapy protocol to be applied within the trial.

This observership has given me some idea of how best to develop a dose-escalation strategy to a biological target volume and learn to implement this in clinical practice and incorporate this into future dose-escalation studies in the treatment of other subsites of the head and neck, eg HPV-negative oropharyngeal and sinonasal tumours. This experience has also provided insight on the experience and management of late complications and the strategies adopted to minimise these. Adaptive radiotherapy incorporating image guided radiotherapy and functional imaging is feasible. I would highly recommend this centre for those wishing to gain further experience in this area.

## ACCEA 2015

For 2015 news please visit -  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/advisory-committee-on-clinical-excellence-awards>

## BAHNO Research Grants

*Research grants are awarded by BAHNO to fund research proposals that are judged by the BAHNO adjudication panel to show promise and to substantially contribute to the body of knowledge in head and neck or thyroid cancer and its management.*

## Don't Forget the Travelling Scholarship!

*For many years BAHNO has offered one or more generous travel grants of the order of £1000 to help trainees visit a leading head and neck unit at home or abroad. The application procedure has recently been updated - details are available on the website. Applications must be received by 1st December in order to be considered by BAHNO Council in March, and the successful applicant(s) will be announced at the AGM*

## Council:

<i>President</i>	<i>Mr Paul Pracy</i>
<i>President Elect</i>	<i>Mr Mike Fardy</i>
<i>Admin. Sec.</i>	<i>Mr Nick Roland</i>
<i>Conference Sec.</i>	<i>Mr Ricard Simo</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Mr Cyrus Kerawala</i>

## Elected Members:

<i>Clinical Oncology:</i>	<i>Otolaryngology:</i>
<i>Prof C Nutting</i>	<i>Mr Vin Palerie</i>
<i>Dr Bernadette Foran</i>	<i>Prof Hisham Mehanna</i> <i>(Chair Education Com)</i>

<i>Maxillofacial Surgery:</i>	<i>Plastic Surgery:</i>
<i>Mr Sat Parmar</i>	<i>Mr Steven Morley</i>
<i>Prof James McCaul</i>	<i>Mr Gary Ross</i>

<i>Additional Specialties:</i>	<i>Trainee Rep:</i>
<i>Pathology:</i>	<i>Miss Paula Bradley</i>
<i>Dr S Thavaraj</i>	
<i>Affiliate:</i>	
<i>Mrs Audrey Scott</i>	

## For Your Diary

### BAHNO ANNUAL MEETING & AGM

**Date:** 24th April 2015

**Venue:** Royal College of Physicians London

### IFHNOS and EHNS

BAHNO is a fully paid up member of the International Federation of Head and Neck Oncologic Societies (IFHNOS) and the European Head and Neck Society.

<http://www.ifhnos.org/home.asp>

## Any Questions?

Please contact the Secretariat: Jill McFarland  
at: [secretariat@bahno.org.uk](mailto:secretariat@bahno.org.uk)

Please let Jill have your e-mail address and any change in contact details if you have not already done so, otherwise you may miss out on important news and information such as the ACCEA process!

## ...and finally!

Remember that full details of all membership categories, how to join BAHNO, application forms for research grants and the travelling fellowship, full programme for the Annual Scientific Conference, abstract forms etc. and much more can be found on our website at:

[www.bahno.org.uk](http://www.bahno.org.uk)