

BAHNO Newsletter

November 2022



Professor Vinidh Paleri – BAHNO President

It is a bleak, wet and wintry day as I put my thoughts to paper on this Newsletter. The storm clouds outside my window seem to be a metaphor for the forthcoming winter pressures across the NHS. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has just told us (on the “Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg” programme) that there are >400,000 patients waiting for surgery beyond one year, compared to 1300 before the pandemic. How will an already strained healthcare delivery system cope with such an increase in workload without proper investment?

You may have seen the recent report (<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-022-5151-4>), co-authored by one of our council members (C Paterson) on the analysis of head and neck cancer (HNC) over the last 10 years from all UK registries, indicating that the rates of advanced disease are higher than early stages (59% vs41%). The data analysis stopped pre-pandemic. While this could be a reflection of stage migration with improved diagnostics and data collection, I very much fear this rise be even higher after the pandemic. BAHNO are working with other stakeholders to define a focused national audit process, which will extend beyond the pandemic, where we can use existing national datasets to gain a better insight into the population, tumour epidemiology and to understand the care provided.

Last year (2021-2022) saw, for the first time since records began, over 100,000 (100,461) patients being diagnosed with early-stage cancer – the highest proportion on record; with £2.3 billion is being invested to expand diagnostics, one can hope for a reversal of trends. However, the myriad reasons for late presentation in HNC are not well understood, with health education, misattribution of symptoms and societal factors yet to be fully teased out. I apologise for the rather pessimistic view, but I don't think current measures in place for HNC diagnosis will meet the NHS long term plan's ambitions of

diagnosing 75% of cancers at stage I or II by 2028, by brute increase in numbers through urgent pathways. In these straightened times, innovation is key; at a recent meeting on early diagnosis, I was pleased to hear the numerous pathways that local teams have created to improve outcomes. No doubt, many of these might be presented at the next annual meeting.

While the government's focus is very much on early diagnostics, some of the staggering advances in outcomes in other advanced cancers (e.g., melanoma, prostate) do give us hope. It is through better pathways for diagnosis involving risk stratification, improved understanding of cancer biology and consequent better treatments where survival gains for our patients will be made.

BAHNO has spearheaded the creation of National Head and Neck Cancer Charity coalition and significant strides have been made. Two members of the coalition (Oracle Cancer Trust and North West Cancer Research) have come together to fund a research project to look at inequities in HNC care after the pandemic.

BAHNO has had a productive year delivering an outstanding annual scientific meeting with plans to build on this next year under the leadership of Professor Stuart Winter. We have also put in place robust arrangements for our EDI agenda under the leadership of Ms Somiah Siddiq. Additionally, several BAHNO members have come together and collaborated with eight other national organisations to finalise the sixth edition of the UK National Multidisciplinary Head and Neck Cancer Guidelines, edited by Professors Jarrod Homer and Stuart Winter.

As mentioned in my presidential address, I am also actively campaigning for our membership to increase the number of oncologists and we have had meetings with the RCR and other oncology forums to that effect. I am also proud to say that we have made our allied health professional members full voting members for council elections and for other matters within the AGM. You will see from the Newsletter different aspects of progress across the governance, research and educational domains within BAHNO.

There has never been a greater time for training professionals in Head and Neck Cancer Care and I would beseech each and every one of you to try and encourage juniors to pursue a career in Head and Neck Cancer care. Anecdotally

I am hearing of fewer surgical trainees willing to take up head and neck surgical practice, opting instead to take up specialisms outside of cancer care

I would like to express my profound thanks to all council members who have contributed to the running of this organisation despite heavy clinical commitments, and especially Laura Manning, who keeps us all in line. I hope you enjoy an excellent festive break, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the next annual meeting.



Mr Andrew Schache – Honorary Secretary

As this is the first newsletter contribution that I've made since taking over from Professor Peter Brennan as Hon Secretary, I'd like to extend my personal thanks, and that of the broader BAHNO membership, for his considerable contribution to the Association. He left the role of Hon Secretary in a very strong position, making things considerably easier.

Our Association has sustained a period of growth over the last few months with a membership of nearly 500 members. As the only UK specialty association that represents all elements of the Head and Neck multidisciplinary team, BAHNO council would like to see a broadening of membership, particularly with new members from a Clinical or Medical Oncology and AHP backgrounds, helping to reflect the size and influence of those specialist groups. Please do encourage both your colleagues and trainees to visit the website and consider [joining our association](https://www.bahno.org.uk).

With a view to ensuring that BAHNO continues to see and promote equality, diversity and inclusivity within our association, the BAHNO Constitution is being reviewed and updated.



Report from Ms Somiah Siddiq – Head & Neck Surgeon and BAHNO EDI Lead:

BAHNO is unique, as one of the few truly multidisciplinary societies, representing members from a wide range of professional backgrounds with the common goal of treatment, care and advocacy for patients with head and neck cancer.

An urgent focus of attention has been the review and reformation of the BAHNO constitution (pending AGM approval in May 2023). To ensure parity for our AHPs colleagues we aim to establish full voting rights in all future council elections with standardisation and parity of terms of service for all serving members on BAHNO council. Current terminology of ‘membership type’ to ensure inclusivity for our AHPs is also under review. BAHNO society membership fees (one of the lowest of any society) will not be increased akin to the upcoming BAHNO 2023 conference fees, to ease pressures with the current cost of living crisis and reduce impact upon the widening access agenda.

In order to provide appropriate services and support for our growing BAHNO membership we need to understand who our members are. Hence, we will be inviting our membership to complete diversity and speciality data through the BAHNO website shortly. We also would recommend to our members to collate diversity data for their patients as part of service evaluation and provision to support culturally competent care and equitable access.

Representation matters to our patients and is associated with higher levels of patient trust and treatment compliance. We acknowledge the need to support the agenda for diversifying the future workforce within both medical and surgical specialities and crucially our AHPs (who form the largest group within Head and Neck Oncology workforce) through active mentorship/sponsorship and visibility. The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) datasets highlight nationally the disparate career progression faced by those from ethnic minorities with the need to highlight the plight of women of colour facing intersectionality, particularly black women.

Disparate research opportunities for under-represented group members are a recurring theme and mirrored in allied AHP societies. We will be working with

allied societies, including the RCSLT, BDA, BAHNON, RCR and our charity partners to monitor and promote the widening access agenda in research. BAHNO members currently leading on national research roles or are Principal Investigators are invited to support our work and to familiarise themselves with the [NHIR EDI toolkit](#) to embed inclusive research principles.

We must acknowledge that for the first time since the inception of BAHNO, the council has reached gender parity under the current Presidential term. To address the acute issue of under representation of Women Head and Neck Surgeons within the NHS and on faculty for Head and Neck courses and Surgical Society meetings, we have launched the Women Surgeons BAHNO speakers' bureau open to all Women Head and Neck Surgeons in ENT, OMFS and Plastics. Organisations may [contact us](#) via our website or directly enquire through the BAHNO twitter feed to access the bureau. We will endeavour to ensure BAHNO meetings and partner events comply with our 'visibility in diversity' agenda and take care to promote events/campaigns through our various social media platforms with similar aims.

The role and responsibilities of surgical societies in supporting members facing discrimination and poor workplace behaviours has been bravely brought to the forefront recently¹. With 24% of women ENT (Head and Neck) surgeons raising concerns, BAHNO are keen to avoid the publication of hollow equity statements and as highlighted from a recent systemic review² of surgical societies 'leading from behind'. We acknowledge that an EDI policy is distinct from an anti-racist/discrimination policy, the latter requiring a code of conduct for council and wider membership to adhere to and an ongoing area of work currently.

Finally, for any members who wish to reach out with any personal concerns or contribution towards the EDI agenda please do not hesitate to [contact me](#). This work is not easy and as the saying goes 'allyship is a verb not a noun' and we hope collectively to improve the experiences for ALL and not just the few within the BAHNO family and ultimately benefit the patients we serve.

References

Garnham A, Forsythe R. Bullying and harassment: a disease for eradication. *Vasc Soc G.B.Irel.* 2022;2(1):2-3 (doi.org/10.54522/jvsgbi.2022.041).

Heisler CA, Miller P, Stephens EH, Ton J, Temkin SM. Leading from Behind: Paucity of gender equity statements and policies among professional surgical societies. *Am J Surg.* 2020 Nov;220(5):1132-1135.

UK National Free Flap Registry (UKNFR)

Mr Peter Kalu, the UKNFR Audit Lead, continues to prepare a report every three months, each being [available on the BAHNO website](#) . The UKBFR remains an excellent tool for GMC-directed audit of practice, appraisal and revalidation for those who undertake these procedures. Beyond supporting benchmarking of personal/unit-level metrics, the high-quality data submitted to the UKNFR represents an outstanding opportunity to build a robust evidence base for H&N free flap / reconstructive surgery. With almost 10,000 free flap operations now recorded in the registry, an update of outcomes is anticipated in the coming months.

Oracle Trust: Peter Rhys Evans Scholarship

Oracle Cancer Trust is delighted to announce a new scholarship scheme for senior Head and Neck Cancer Trainees who would benefit from financial support to attend international multidisciplinary Head and Neck cancer conferences. The scholarship is being awarded in the name of Oracle's Founder, the late Peter Rhys Evans, who was a strong advocate of multidisciplinary and international best practice exchange.



The Oracle Cancer Trust Peter Rhys Evans Scholarship is available NOW and applications are being accepted for attendance at the upcoming ESTRO - Multidisciplinary management of head and neck oncology conference in Amman, Jordan on February 14, 2023. Deadline December 16, 2022.

There will be two scholarships available in 2023. Every year there will be one scholarship available with a medical/oncology focus and one scholarship with a surgical focus. The next scholarship will have a surgical focus.

Further information [available here](#) Please contact the Oracle Research team if you have questions about your eligibility for this scheme or require any assistance with your application: research@oraclecancertrust.org

BDJ Themed Edition: Head and Neck Cancer

[The latest edition](#) on improved collaboration in Head and Neck Cancer Care and has been guest edited by Ms. Lorna McCaul and Professor Vinidh Paleri. November is, of course, Mouth Cancer Action Month. Mouth cancer, however, is just one of many types of HNCs. The aim of this issue, therefore, is to widen the focus to all HNCs and to describe the importance of dental health and dental care in this context.

Guidance of the reporting of thyroid cytology

BAHNO was a stakeholder in this recent publication – many thanks to Dr Adam Jones (Pathology rep on Council) for his work on this.

<https://www.rcpath.org/profession/guidelines/specialty-specific-publications.html>

BAHNO 2023

This will be held on Friday 19th May 2023 at The Royal College of Physicians, London. The theme of the meeting is:

Decision making in head and neck cancer care

BAHNO welcomes abstracts from all specialties involved in head and neck cancer treatment and prevention. Prizes are available for outstanding contributions in both oral and poster presentation categories, with a particular emphasis on submissions by trainees and AHPs. **SUBMISSION DEADLINE – SUNDAY 29TH JANUARY 2023.** Abstracts selected for oral presentation will be submitted for publication to the Journal of Oral Pathology and Medicine.

We are excited to announce that Dr Liz O’Riordan, International speaker, broadcaster and award-winning co-author of ‘The Complete Guide to Breast Cancer: How to Feel Empowered and Take Control’ will give the Blair Hesketh Lecture.

Please submit your [abstract here](#)

[Registration](#) will open shortly

Ray Derkacz



Mr Ray Derkacz sadly passed away very suddenly on the 6th of September 2022. Ray was a great supporter of Head and Neck Cancer Research and was a devoted fundraiser. He became involved whilst supporting his beloved wife Heather through her many treatments for Head and Neck cancer. The generous support that Ray offered continued over very many years and he was extremely well-regarded and a popular volunteer and supporter of various Head and Neck Cancer charitable organisations.

Ray was instrumental in setting up Heads2gether, a support network for patients and carers. Initially this charity was based in Oxford, but Ray worked collaboratively, allowing this to reach further afield, which widened its coverage allowing more people to benefit from this much needed and additional support. Ray was hugely involved with “Heads Up” an Oxford based charity supporting Head and Neck Cancer research, and more latterly with the Oracle Cancer Trust. Ray was also involved in directing research and was a lay member of several national studies. Ray leaves behind his wife Heather. **Prof. Stuart Winter**



Future vacancies on Council

Council meets, usually, four times a year –and these meetings are mostly held on a virtual platform. There are representatives from all categories of members.

From the AGM 2023, Council will be needing a new representative for ENT as Professor Jarrod Homer will have served his full term. Also needed is a new representative for Plastic Surgery as Mr Omar Ahmed will also have completed his term of office. Nominations will be invited early next year.

The Treasurer, Mr James O’Hara, comes to the end of his current term of office but is eligible, and willing, to stand for a further term. Likewise, Mr Michael Nugent from the OMFS contingent. Other nominations will be sought for both posts.

Please look out for the call for nominations – and return your voting papers promptly!



Dates for the diary

There are details of conferences and courses relevant to BAHNO members on the [BAHNO website](#)

Here are some events that may be of interest:

26 November 2022 Online: [Webinar on Otolaryngology, Speech Pathology & HNS](#)

28 – 29 November 2022 Newcastle Surgical Training Centre, Freeman Hospital Newcastle: [Robotic TORS](#)

10 February 2023 [BIR/BSHNI Head and neck imaging refresher course 2023](#)
Leeds

23 – 26 February 2023 [Turkish Head & Neck Cancer Society](#), Antalya Nirvana Hotel.

13 – 17 March 2023 [Liverpool Practical Microvascular Surgery Course](#),
University of Liverpool



*****BAHNO website – new Members' Area*****

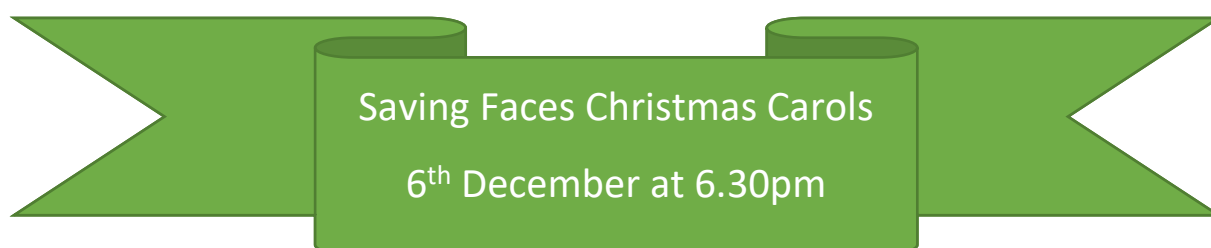
BAHNO will be introducing a new Members' Area very shortly – your 2023 membership invoices will be available here along with records of previous payments. You will shortly be receiving an email inviting you to log-on to the new site to choose your password. This new feature will enable you to make payments by credit / debit card – many members may find this more convenient

than paying by Direct Debit or by Standing Order. Also in this area you will find details of awards available, AGM minutes, nomination forms, etc. Any problems, please do contact [Laura](#) in the secretariat. Please be aware that the new automated system may not be as forgiving about late payments!



AmazonSmile

If you intend to buy anything from Amazon, please click through to AmazonSmile and choose [The British Association of Head and Neck Oncologists](#) as your preferred charity. There is absolutely no cost to you, but every purchase you make through the site will send a small donation to BAHNO. It all helps! Thank you



Location: The Priory Church of St Bartholomew the Great, London, EC1A 9DS

There is no charge but spaces are limited so please book straightaway if you want to come.

Please see the poster below for more details and please write to info@savingfaces.co.uk or call 07487 235438 or 020 3417 7757 to book your place.

Please [click here](#) for the poster or email hutch.london@gmail.com or phone Iain on (07889) 473916 if you have any burning issues you want to discuss.

Iain Hutchison