

THESIS Update

Time to Hand Over the THESIS Reins

The last two years have been landmark times for THESIS, THE Skin Investigation Society, first formed in 1990 as a research group for registrars and young consultants. Please excuse me for spelling out this acronym, but one of our past-Presidents of the BAD did say to me recently that she “had no idea what THESIS had stood for all these years!” In fact, the name came to me one day in one of those “Eureka!” moments when driving up the M5 on my way to give a talk on PAF and other inflammatory mediators in Leeds (thanks for inviting me, Bill). At that time of rather formal national and international meetings, as a ‘young’ consultant myself, I perceived the need for a more informal setting where registrars would not feel daunted by the prospect of presenting their research and perhaps being ‘shot down by some critical questions from the floor’. Since then we have held regular relaxed and enjoyable meetings, with an emphasis on fun and, in the earlier days in Bristol, the odd game of mixed basketball! In June of last year we held the 20th Anniversary Meeting of THESIS and this June we celebrated its 21st birthday.

The THESIS Meetings

Since 2006, we have continued the THESIS meetings as the THESIS/BAD/BSID Research Course, a two-day event at the BAD. As previously, I would like to acknowledge Chris Griffiths and Graham Ogg, with their BAD and BSID hats on at the time, for having the vision to continue the well-established THESIS concept as a collaborative effort between THESIS, the BAD and BSID. The first floor lecture room at Willan House is an ideal venue for this interactive meeting, allowing good rapport between the invited speakers and the registrars, research fellows, ‘core medical trainees’, and some foundation doctors. Some of the younger attendees have come through our *DermSchool* initiative at the BAD.

The aim of THESIS has always been to encourage young dermatologists to

develop a **theme of research**, hopefully towards a higher degree as well as high quality publications. An additional aim of the THESIS/BAD/BSID Research Course is to provide the foundation knowledge of research for clinical trainees, who will be doing research in dermatology as part of their training. New consultants are always most welcome to attend the regular meetings, recently held annually.

We usually have a combination of stimulating talks from well-known and willing professors, research-active consultants, and SpRs or research fellows, some of whom have completed their thesis and others who might be in the midst of writing. Those new to dermatology particularly like to hear how various experts got into research and how they chose their academic paths. The ‘registrars’ (who might by then be senior lecturers or consultants) are encouraged to talk about ‘the joys and pitfalls of research’ (see *Table 1: Guidelines for ‘Registrar’ Speakers*).



Clive Archer

The last three meetings have been as enthusiastically received as ever. In 2009 one of the attendees insisted on a ‘team photo’ in Fitzroy Square (*Fig 1*), during a couple of days when the Square was filled with the pleasant

Table 1: GUIDELINES FOR ‘REGISTRAR’ SPEAKERS
‘The joys and pitfalls of research’

	Perhaps you might cover the following points during your talk:
1.	At what stage of your training did you carry out your research, and how long did the experimental work and writing up take?
2.	How did you become involved in your particular research?
3.	What was known from the literature when the studies were commenced?
4.	Aims of research (specific questions/hypotheses).
5.	Ethics, including consent.
6.	Methodology: timetable necessary for carrying out experimental work; where performed; problems encountered; amount of technical assistance; degree of collaboration.
7.	Statistical advice.
8.	Summary of results (we do want to see a selection of your data).
9.	Conclusions.
10.	Degree of supervision.
11.	Involvement in obtaining funds for research.
12.	Presentations of research at meetings.
13.	Associated publications (papers arising from work).
14.	When thesis was submitted/awarded (if applicable).
15.	Lessons learned.

Table 2: Programme for the THESIS 2010 Meeting

Thursday 10th June	Friday 11th June
11:00 Introduction: why do research? Dr Clive Archer, Bristol	09:30 Laboratory based research relevant to the clinic Prof Edel O'Toole, London
11:20 Clinical research Prof Nick Reynolds, Newcastle upon Tyne	10:05 p63 is implicated in apoptotic dysregulation in melanoma Dr Rubeta Matin, London
12:00 Qualitative research approaches Prof Alex Anstey, Cardiff	10:30 How to carry out and write up an MD or PhD Dr Jane Sterling, Cambridge
12:30 The potential of pharmacogenetics to optimise methotrexate use for psoriasis Dr Richard Warren, Manchester	11:00 An update of biological therapies in psoriasis Dr Malcolm Rustin, London
14:00 Cutaneous changes in renal transplant recipients: is there a relationship between benign and malignant diseases? Dr Aoife Lally, London	12:10 Fibroblast cell therapy for recessive dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa Dr Tracy Wong, Amersham
14:35 Use and abuse of statistics Prof Jonathan Rees, Edinburgh	12:35 Clinicopathological associations in mucous membrane pemphigoid Dr Jane Setterfield, London
15:10 Epidemiological studies Dr Carsten Flohr, London	13:45 Research in medical education Dr Ginny Hubbard, London
16:30 Alitretinoin for chronic hand eczema: a NICE application of critical appraisal skills Dr John Ingram, Cardiff	14:15 Presenting and publishing your study Dr Clive Grattan, Norwich and London
19:30 20th Anniversary Dinner Speaker: Prof Chris Griffiths, Manchester	14:45 Interactive summary session and evaluation Dr Clive Archer, Bristol et al

sounds of opera; a touch of Tosca accompanying Malcolm Greaves's superb after-dinner speech. Naturally I took full credit for arranging all of the festivities!

Last year's 20th Anniversary Meeting was a great success and the full programme is shown in *Table 2*.

I am so grateful to the many expert speakers and 'approachable advisers' over the years, either at the Bristol meetings or in London. I have great memories of those splendid weekend

meetings in Bristol: does anyone else remember which speakers sustained a fractured distal phalanx or ruptured Achilles tendon on the basketball court? Not the same person, thankfully!

The 11th THESIS Meeting went very well in June. In addition to last year's experts, a big thank you also to Jonathan Barker, Hywel Williams and

John English for their contributions. The 'registrar' presentations were most enlightening and I have listed them in *Table 3*. I think you can see at a glance how healthy dermatological research is in the UK, thanks to the organisational skills and drive of the clinician academics in various centres up and down the country. Well done to them! I am delighted to say that Rod Hay gave a most interesting after-dinner speech, allowing us some insight into his world perspective on dermatology.

Next year's 12th THESIS meeting is planned for Thursday 14th and Friday 15th June 2012. I am most grateful to JANSSEN-CILAG for educational support for the last two meetings, and to the BAD's Conference and Event Services for their help in the hands-on organisation.

The THESIS Library

The Skin Investigation Society Library was formed at the BAD in 1991, and currently houses 150 theses from research studies in the UK and elsewhere, covering a fascinating range of subjects. *Table 4* shows the list of theses added to the THESIS Library in the last 7 years. The library is housed in the Academic Office on the second floor of Willan House, having expanded recently into some beautiful new custom-made bookshelves. We are always on the look out for new additions, young or old, and I can be contacted at the BAD via the Academic Administrator.

Table 3: THESIS 2011 Meeting – 'registrar' presentations

Thursday 10th June
Aspects of HPV disease in HIV infection Dr Rhonda Meys, London
The filaggrin story goes on and on Dr Sara Brown, Dundee
Lighting up the skin: non-invasive fluorescence imaging of skin cancer Dr Rakesh Patalay, London
Harlequin ichthyosis and ABC A12 mutations Dr Shefali Rajpopat, London
Allergic contact dermatitis: getting an MD by publication Dr John McFadden, London



Fig 1: Team photo at the THESIS 2009 Meeting: "Sport and research have much in common!"

The THESIS Fellowship

We have so far awarded three THESIS Fellowships for the best MD or PhD thesis in a two-year period, and the fourth THESIS Fellowship will be awarded later this year. Previous recipients of the Fellowship are Afrina Alam in 2005, Helen Young in 2007 and Carsten Flohr in 2009.

The Future of THESIS

The future of THESIS itself has been secured in that we have arranged for THESIS to continue within the academic

section of the BAD. Mike Ardern-Jones, a great supporter of the THESIS meetings over the years as a registrar and then senior lecturer, has very kindly accepted the role of THESIS Organiser.

Both Mike and Jane Sterling, or future Academic Vice Presidents, sit on the BAD Research Committee, currently chaired by Nick Reynolds, where the activities of THESIS are a regular item on the agenda. In addition to co-ordinating future THESIS meetings as the THESIS/BAD/BSID Research Course, Mike will supervise the award of the

THESIS Fellowships. I will continue as a THESIS Organiser, mostly in my role as the THESIS Librarian. I'm planning to enjoy the evolving annual meetings until it's time to concentrate on improving my tennis! More information can be obtained about THESIS activities, including the details of previous meetings, on the BAD website. A big thank you to everyone for supporting THESIS over the years and in the future!

Dr Clive Archer

THESIS Organiser and Librarian

Table 4: Theses added to the THESIS Library in the last 7 years

Woodrow S. L. The mechanisms of Human Papillomavirus-induced benign proliferation. Ph.D. Thesis (Cambridge), 2003.	Young H. S. An investigation of the role of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) in the pathogenesis of psoriasis. Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester), 2006.	Holme S. A. Clinical, Biochemical, Haematological and Molecular Epidemiology of Erythropoietic Protoporphyrria. A United Kingdom Cross-Sectional Study. M.D. Thesis (Edinburgh), 2009.
Anstey A. V. Characterisation of clinical and photobiological features of photosensitivity in the Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome. M.D. Thesis (London), 2004.	Flohr C. Helminths and allergic disease in Vietnam. Ph.D. Thesis (Nottingham), 2007.	Ismail F. Ultraviolet Radiation-induced Apoptosis in the Pathogenesis of Cutaneous Squamous Cell Carcinoma. Ph.D. (London), 2009.
Kerr O. Dermatology: Undergraduate and postgraduate experience of Lothian GPs.	Lacy K. E. The Effects of Ageing on Cutaneous Immunity. Ph.D. Thesis (London), 2007.	Kleyn C. E. The 'Brain-Skin' Axis in Health and Disease. Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester), 2009.
M. Med. Education Thesis (Belfast), 2004	Palmer R. A. Ultraviolet-induced immunomodulation in polymorphic light eruption. Ph.D. Thesis (London), 2007.	Lally A. C. Cutaneous changes in renal transplant recipients - is there a relationship between benign and malignant disease? M.D. Thesis (Dublin), 2009.
Lotery H. E. An epidemiological study of women with vulval burning. M.D. Thesis (Belfast), 2004.	Archer C. B. Graduate Entry Medical Students' Experiences and Perceptions of the University of Bristol Medicine Course. MSc. Med. Ed. Thesis (UCL), 2008.	Mowbray M. Nitric oxide as a regulator of apoptosis and inflammation in human skin following ultraviolet irradiation. M.D. Thesis (Edinburgh), 2009.
Ramsay H. M. Non-melanoma skin cancer in renal transplant recipients. M.D. Thesis (Birmingham), 2004.	Fassihi H. The impact of molecular diagnostics on the feasibility of prenatal testing in epidermolysis bullosa. M.D. Thesis (London), 2008.	Setterfield J. F. Clinicopathological associations in mucous membrane pemphigoid. M.D. Thesis (London), 2009.
Wain E. M. Fine mapping of chromosome 10q deletions and candidate gene analysis in Mycosis Fungoides and Sezary Syndrome. MD Thesis (London), 2004.	Hubbard V. G. What influences students' perceptions of different types of online interaction and what application does it have for the facilitator? MSc. Med. Ed. Thesis (UCL), 2008.	Wong T. The influence of allogeneic fibroblasts on type VII collagen deposition at the basement membrane zone in recessive dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa. Ph. D. Thesis (London), 2009.
Alam N. A. Clinical and genetic features of the multiple cutaneous and uterine leiomyomatosis syndrome. Ph.D. Thesis (London), 2005.	Langan S. A prospective study of the effects of the environmental factors on eczema in children. Ph.D. Thesis (Nottingham), 2008.	Brooke R. C. C. Mechanisms underlying the erythematous response to topical 5-aminolaevulinic acid photodynamic therapy. M.D. Thesis (Manchester), 2010.
Brown V. L. The role of p16 ^{INK4a} & p14 ^{ARF} tumour suppressor genes in the pathogenesis of cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma. M.D.Thesis (London), 2005.	Ling T. C. Polymorphic Light Eruption – Prevalence, Psychological Impact, Treatment. M.D. Thesis (Manchester), 2008.	Lai Cheong J. E. Functional characterisation of kindlin-1 in epidermal human keratinocytes and its relevance to Kindler Syndrome. Ph.D. Thesis (London), 2010.
Mallipeddi R. Understanding squamous cell carcinoma in epidermolysis bullosa. M.D. Thesis (London), 2005.	Morar N. The Genetics and Genomics of Atopic Dermatitis. Ph.D. Thesis (Oxford), 2008.	Matin R. N. H. TP63 is implicated in apoptotic dysregulation in melanoma. Ph.D. Thesis (London), 2010.
Ameen M. Genetic analysis of psoriasis and its clinical subtypes. M.D. Thesis (London), 2006.	Perrett C. M. Azathioprine, UVA and Skin Cancer in Organ Transplant Recipients. Ph.D. Thesis (London), 2008.	Mcfadden J. Clinical and experimental aspects of allergic contact dermatitis to paraphenylenediamine. D.M. Thesis (Southampton), 2010.
Beattie P. E. An Investigation of the clinical and photobiological effects of high-output UVA1. M.D. Thesis (Dundee), 2006.	Warren R. B. The potential of pharmacogenetics to optimise methotrexate use for psoriasis. Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester), 2008.	Walker S. L. The measurement, treatment and immunopathology of leprosy type 1 reactions. Ph.D. Thesis (London), 2010.
Bushan M. Modulation of human epidermal Langerhans cell migration. M.D. Thesis (Manchester), 2006.	Campalani E. A pharmacogenetic study of the use of acitretin and methotrexate in psoriasis. M.D. Thesis (London), 2009.	
Cooper S. M. Genital lichen planus. M.D. Thesis (Bristol), 2006.		
Hampton P. J. The role of glycogen synthase kinase-3β in the pathogenesis of lithium provoked psoriasis. Ph.D. Thesis (Newcastle upon Tyne), 2006.		