The British Association of Gynaecological Pathologists

BAGP NEWSLETTER

2021

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday 25th March 2022
Spring 1-day course (Molecular)
Virtual Conference via Zoom webinar

Wednesday 8th June 2022
Meet the Experts! Trainee Meeting
Hybrid Conference, London

Thursday 9th & Friday 10th June 2022
18th Annual 2-day Meeting
Hybrid Conference, London

September 2022 – 19th to 23rd September 2022
Gynaecological Pathology Long Course

Every month in 2022
Free monthly teaching webinars

https://www.thebagp.org/events/list/

A bird's eye view – President's report



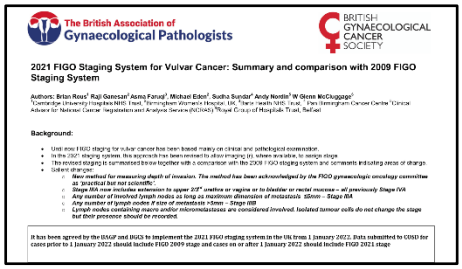
Dear Members and Colleagues,

It has been my great privilege to serve as the President of the BAGP for the last three years. The organisation is stronger than ever, with more than 450 members from more than 23 countries, including consultants, trainees and scientists.

Through 2021, we have carried on with the business of the association. Our 17th annual meeting took on a completely virtual format. Our emigration to the virtual space has reduced our carbon footprint. Kudos to our meetings secretaries, Dr Saimah Arif and Dr Rupali Arora, who have not only held the three meetings per year but expanded the educational portfolio to include an exam preparation course for consultant BMS and the monthly trainee webinars. They have been ably supported administratively by the wonderful Elsa Taylor and Louise Dence. I would like to extend special recognition to our council members who responded as a team and worked across boundaries to make the virtual meetings such a success. The highly acclaimed week-long course in gynaecological pathology became virtual. Far from detracting from the interactive and practical nature of the course, the virtual medium allowed a

greater number of delegates and faculty from across the world to interact with each other.

The BAGP has led on the RCPath dataset on cervical carcinoma and on the awaited tissue pathway. Dr Rupali Arora leads on the next edition of the endometrial dataset. We have worked with the BGCS and produced joint pathways for BRCA/HRD, MMR testing and FIGO staging of carcinoma of the vulva. We continue to work with them in looking at producing evidence-based pathway for histology reviews in gynaecological oncology. We have produced the BAGP badged December 2021 issue of Diagnostic Histopathology on an update on pathology of female genital tract tumours.


The British Association of Gynaecological Pathologists

BRITISH GYNAECOLOGICAL CANCER SOCIETY

2021 FIGO Staging System for Vulvar Cancer: Summary and comparison with 2009 FIGO Staging System

Background:

It has been agreed by the BSGP and BGCS to implement the 2021 FIGO staging system in the UK from 1 January 2022. Data submitted to COSD for cases prior to 1 January 2022 should include FIGO 2009 stage and cases on or after 1 January 2022 should include FIGO 2021 stage

It has now become easier to access information on our website. Please take an extra moment to browse through our expanded website that has many new features. Dr Duaa Abu-Sinn has driven this change with Dr Bruce Tanchel and Mrs Elsa Taylor. Dr Abu-Sinn's contribution in this newsletter highlights the changes.

Although the world faces economic and environmental challenges, our current fiscal situation is sound thanks to our Treasurer Dr Gerhard van Schalkwyk. We have taken professional advice and are moving to become a charitable organisation; a move that will allow greater ability to invest in our mission statement.



The BAGP research subgroup continues to be active. The research award for 2021 goes to Dr Alison Finall. We have instituted a new award - the Hilary Buckley Award - for the best poster submission at the BAGP Annual Meeting. The 2021 winner of this award is Dr Joanna Round.

As our organisation has grown into its late teens, we felt the need to document its history. I am greatly honoured that all our previous presidents have joined this venture and agreed to provide their recollections of the BAGP. We are specially indebted to Dr Nafisa Wilkinson, who has been a part of the BAGP since its inception, for her input. I would like to request all of you to send your best memories of the BAGP to info@thebagp.org and make this history-seeking journey a success.

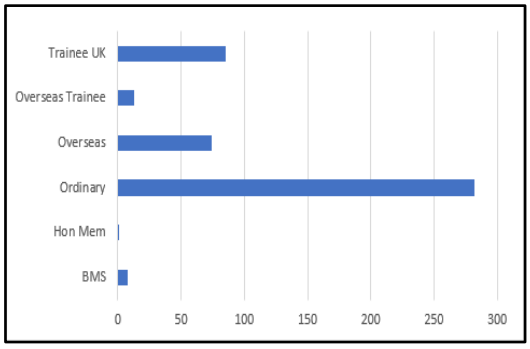
This will be my last newsletter. It has been an enormous pleasure and privilege to serve the community of gynaecological pathologists in the UK and around the world. I thank my colleagues, past and present, who have made this personal journey so memorable for all the right reasons. Our President elect, Dr Jason Wong, is a well-known figure and I will hand over the reins to him in November 2022 to take the BAGP to a brighter, better future.

Raji Ganesan, BAGP President

Honorary Secretary Update



We have had another unpredictable year one: that has changed the world forever. I am proud of the way we, at the BAGP Council have met challenges head on and worked within the constraints imposed by the pandemic and continued to deliver high quality educational events in gynaecological pathology. Our membership has continued to grow, and we now have 463 members with 100 new members in the last year.



Two councillors – Dr Baljeet Kaur and Dr Jason Wong have completed their term of office and we thank them for their contribution to the activities of the BAGP over their three-year term. We had

several high-quality nominations for the vacated councillor positions.

We are pleased to announce that the two new Councillors joining the BAGP from June 2022 are Professor Koen Van de Vijver and Dr Sarah Bell. We are delighted to have them on the team.





Dr Raji Ganesan will complete her term of office as President in November 2022. We have received one nomination and we have completed the ratification process through the membership. I am pleased to announce Dr Jason Wong is our President-elect.

I will continue as the Honorary Secretary for my last term and look forward to continuing working with the Council to take a stronger, more robust BAGP into a post Covid world.

Bruce Tanchel, Honorary Secretary

Money matters – an update from the Treasurer



We have continued to be successful and have been adaptive to the changes brought upon us during the pandemic.

The BAGP poster competition and research bursary continued virtually. This year's annual research award bursary winner is Dr Alison Finall for a project on 'Correlation of inflammatory response, PD-L1 expression and microsatellite instability with five-year survival data in endometriosis-associated ovarian cancer (EAOC) patients'.

As Treasurer, I am pleased to report that our finances are in good condition. We have invested in further website developments, additional admin support and a virtual event platform.

The BAGP is growing from strength to strength and the team involved have been instrumental in making this happen. Our mission to promote health of women, advance knowledge and practice of gynaecological pathology, improve accuracy of diagnosis, educate and develop is due to the continued support of all our members and council.

Gerry van Schalkwyk, Treasurer

BAGP Meetings Matters





Our series of 2021 educational activities have seen record attendance numbers.

- January - 'Tumours of the female genital tract – updates from the 5th edition of the WHO classification' (1 day conference)
- June - 17th Annual Meeting in collaboration with ISGyP – 'Biopsy pathology of the female genital tract' (2 day conference)
- September – Week long course
- November – 'An update in cervical pathology for UK pathologists' (half day conference)

All conferences were virtual in light of the ongoing restrictions enforced by the pandemic. Whilst we missed the face-to-face contact and social networking opportunities, the virtual arena did facilitate greater and more far-reaching attendance with delegates from 23 countries attending. Over 350 delegates attended both the January and June meetings.





Our oversubscribed week-long course was expanded to allow 50 attendees. Similarly, in the virtual medium, we were able to engage more international speakers than ever before and as well as our excellent UK speakers, benefitted from a range of overseas lecturers from as far afield as Australia and Hong Kong.

Some novel initiatives were introduced this year in the form of a half day course for advanced practitioners with a mock examination and live stretch sessions during our longer meetings.

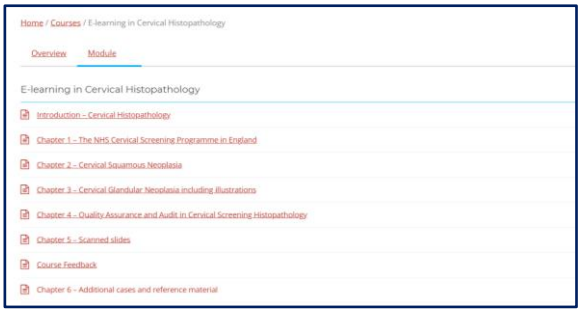
Our monthly virtual webinars for trainees that were first introduced in November 2020 have continued through 2021 and have soared in popularity, with over 200 delegates attending regularly.

We are planning our 2022 calendar as we write, and our flagship annual meeting will be a hybrid meeting with the face to face component being held at the Royal College of Physicians in London. We thank you for your support this year and look forward to seeing you at our event in 2022!



Saimah Arif & Rupali Arora, Meeting Secretaries

Cervical e-Learning Online Edition - Why has the e-learning been set up?



Cervical e-learning is a PHE initiative. They perceived a need for Quality Assurance in histopathology reporting of specimens arising from the UK NHS Cervical Screening Programme. In 2014, there was a trial in setting up a specific cervical histopathology EQA which did not continue beyond one circulation. A working group constituted of Dr Steve Ferryman, Dr Paul Cross and Dr Karin Denton with Dr Raji Ganesan as the RCPath representative was set up to look at Quality Assurance in histopathology reporting. In addition to measures such as audit and minimum reporting numbers, it was proposed that a e- learning module would be set up. The BAGP offered to host and maintain the e-learning module. The present e-Learning module consists of mandatory 5 chapters including scanned slides and an additional 6th chapter consisting of educational cases and reference material. Prior to accessing the module, familiarization with the updated

'Cervical Screening Programme histopathology reporting handbook' is recommended. Successful completion of the module (along with other parameters) is a requisite for accreditation of maintaining clinical skills for histopathologists who report cervical histology specimens which are derived from the NHS Cervical Screening Programme. However, any pathologist, irrespective of affiliation or relation with NHSCSP can access it free on the BAGP website.

The BAGP now has an e-learning subgroup who will maintain and develop the learning module on the basis of scientific developments and user feedback. The BAGP interacts with PHE via the PHE's Clinical and Professional Group for Laboratories (Laboratory CPG). Dr Bruce Tanchel represents the BAGP on this group.

Rupali Arora, BAGP Meeting Secretary

A view from our councillor



"The only permanent thing in this world is change". Just like seasons, life, people and situations change. I started my journey as a young consultant in 2011 and found the new responsibilities and challenges that came with this upgrade exciting and at the same time daunting. By the time I settled in this routine, an opportunity arose to join BAGP as a council member in 2019. I have been a part of this incredible organisation for last 3 years and now nearing the end of my tenure in June 2022, I reflect on this prodigious journey and share my experiences.

Although change is constant, the fear of change is also constant. I felt great apprehension when I embarked on this journey, but these faded away rapidly as I realised how accessible, approachable, and collegiate my fellow officers and Council Members were. Dr. Ganesan's infectious enthusiasm and her style of leading from the front got all of us involved and knitted to the fabric and the work of society. The structure of the organisation allowed the new council members to learn from the senior office bearers equipped with knowledge and experience. The council members met regularly to set, and achieve, their goals and to report back to the team. Every council member brought their own philosophy and personal emphasis to the Society and every talent was harnessed by the eagle eye of senior members.

Getting involved with BAGP has added a new dimension to my outlook and my personality. I've benefitted a great deal from the attributes that I acquired from the colleagues in this great team and the importance of communication, transparency, responsiveness, and effective time management has been underpinned. Learning from the finest people in the trade and having the first-hand experience of what goes on behind the scenes that makes the society valued and continuously expanding has given me great clarity and strength.

Despite the challenges of Pandemic, BAGP expanded, embraced changes, and maintained excellence. I would like to thank all our members for their support and the BAGP team for their incredible hard work and persistence. I wish the society continues to grow exponentially with the power to influence change!

Baljeet Kaur, London

Trainee Representative Update



I have been delighted to have the opportunity to represent trainee interests through the BAGP council over the preceding year. Again, it has been a challenging year dominated by COVID, seemingly endless "waves", alternating restrictions and changing plans. However, the challenges presented by these circumstances are ones that I felt the BAGP has risen to admirably.

The BAGP website continues to provide a remarkable resource of guidelines and updates, covering all areas of gynaecological pathology - updated on a regular basis with new and interesting reads! The WHO 5th edition update on

tumours of the genital tract, the BAGP annual meeting and the virtual long course were all amazing teaching opportunities - successfully converted to virtual format with participants attending from all over the world. In addition to these courses, trainees have been supported through BAGP research grant(s), the online cervical e-learning modules and the monthly teaching webinar series (with attendees numbering up to 200+)! The way the BAGP has adapted to provide numerous formats of online learning has been invaluable for exam preparation and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the technical experts (and those who have had to evolve into them!) for the time and effort they have dedicated in to making this happen.

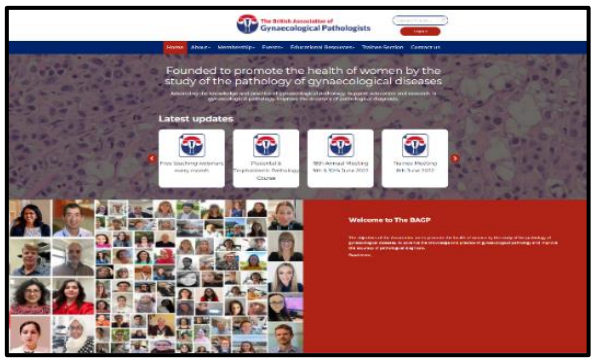
The BAGP continues to put trainees at the heart of interests and learning opportunities – something we hope to build on over the coming year.

Lucy Grant, Birmingham

Website updates



Over the last year or so, our reliance on the internet for virtual learning and staying connected has dramatically increased. The BAGP seized this opportunity to put the website redevelopment at the top of its priorities list. The website team have been working tirelessly in the background for months to make sure the new updated website provides the best experience to BAGP members and the general public.



The main aims are to provide a more user-friendly interface and also to accommodate the increasing amount of educational content provided by the BAGP.

The new updated website features a section dedicated to **Educational Resources**. Its main highlight is the **Gynaecological pathology educational resources** section which includes a library of webinars and presentations. These are organized by site of involvement for e.g. ovary, uterine corpus, vagina and vulva, etc.

There is also a search function to facilitate easier and quicker access. These resources are available to all BAGP members, while non-members have restricted access. Another useful element of this section is the **BAGP guidance documents** which are available to all, including non-members.

Trainee teaching has become a primary focus of the BAGP and the monthly trainee webinars proved very popular. To consolidate our commitment as a society to trainees, we have created a dedicated '**Trainee Section**', which includes all the educational resources, awards and useful



information aimed at trainees. This is accessible to all BAGP members. Information on the trainee representative, trainee-related events and awards is available to the general public as well.

We are hopeful the new site will be ready to launch very soon and we would love to hear from you regarding your website experience and welcome any feedback.

Duaa Abu-Sinn and Elsa Taylor (Website redevelopment team)

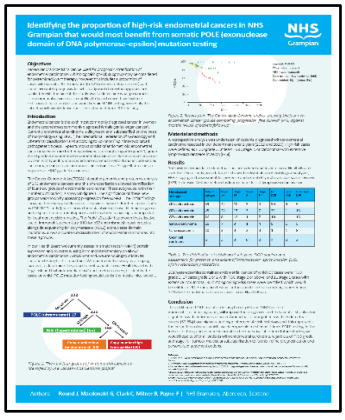
Congratulations! Poster Prize Winner 2021



As a senior trainee with a subspecialist interest in gynaecological pathology I have found the BAGP to be a fantastic association providing great learning resources with free monthly webinars aimed specifically for trainees.

I have had the privilege to attend the WHO 5th edition female genital tract update in January, the 17th Annual Meeting in June and a gynaecological weeklong course in September organised by BAGP.

All these courses have been excellent learning opportunities; however, they have had to be held virtually. Although it's a shame not to meet in person these virtual meetings have had their benefits, with access to great speakers from across the world. As a trainee in the Northernmost histopathology training site in the UK (Aberdeen), it was beneficial to not organise transport and accommodation to all these events! Jokes aside, the BAGP has done a brilliant job continuing its vision of advancing the knowledge and practice of gynaecological pathology in the midst of a global pandemic.


Identifying the proportion of high-risk endometrial cancers in NHS Grampian that would most benefit from somatic POLE (exonuclease domain of DNA polymerase-epsilon) mutation testing

NHS Grampian

I was honoured to receive the Hilary Buckley award for my poster submission presented at the 17th Annual Meeting. My poster assessed women in NHS Grampian to determine who would benefit significantly from POLe mutation testing of endometrial cancers with high grade, high stage or other poor prognostic risk factors. As we look towards 2022, it would be great to see POLe mutation analysis become a standard of gynaecological care in the UK, finding the subset of women that have a better prognosis associated with their endometrial carcinoma so they may be spared the negative side effects and expense of unnecessary chemotherapy.

Joanna Round, Aberdeen

Our first Advanced Practitioner Part C Mock Exam – a delegate's view



Life as a trainee has been difficult during the pandemic and as a Biomedical Scientist undertaking the conjoint RCPath/IBMS ASD in gynae histopathology reporting, the opportunities for appropriate teaching have been limited.

The BAGP has been invaluable in the provision and accessibility of trainee courses through the pandemic, and I was delighted to be offered an opportunity to take part in the first gynae focussed part C mock exam.

The slides for long cases and surgicals arrived promptly along with an information pack and relevant immuno images and macros.

I undertook these under timed exam conditions in my department and returned my answers via email. This was followed by a half day feedback session on zoom delivered by experts in both gynae and examining, in which we reviewed the cases and discussed key pointers and exam techniques. The session was really supportive and helpful and provided a very useful insight into what examiners were looking for.

There were also general tips and advice from recent successful candidates.

There was ample opportunity to ask questions and I came away feeling enriched by the interaction and more confident in my approach to the examination.

Karen Ezard, Kettering General Hospital

Pathology Speciality Advisory Committee (SAC) Update

A few weeks ago, I was presented with the opportunity to attend the RCPath Cellular Pathology Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting 2021. This was the first time I have attended this meeting, so I wasn't sure what to expect. However, it turned out to be a very pleasant and rewarding experience and I was especially proud to be attending on behalf of gynaecological pathology.

First on the agenda was the effect of the COVID pandemic on service delivery and staff shortages which continued into 2021. In addition, the surgical and clinic backlog resulted in increased strain on pathology services. Interestingly, while many pathology specialities had periods of inactivity during the pandemic, gynaecological pathology continued to be a busy service at most times.

The most interesting and gratifying element of the SAC meeting was to observe the positive impact of the BAGP. It was nice to hear other SAC members acknowledge that the BAGP is the longest established subspecialist pathology association in the UK and praise its efforts in promoting gynaecological pathology. Other cellular pathology specialities were very interested in learning from the success of the BAGP model and applying it to their own specialities for e.g. GI pathology and Renal/Transplant pathology. The pandemic and lack of face-to-face interactions highlighted how important it is to be part of a society to share information and be connected in these difficult times.

National EQA schemes were temporarily halted in some specialities due to the pandemic. However, the National Gynaecological Pathology Scheme continued successfully and the virtual review meetings were very well-attended. The trainee teaching webinars run by the BAGP and ISGYP provided a valuable learning platform to ensure our trainees don't miss out on their progress. This opportunity was not available across many specialities.

Last but not least, SAC congratulated BAGP (supported by BGCS, Wellbeing Of Women and Eve Appeal) on its successful application to include POLE testing for endometrial cancers in the National Genomics Directory.

Despite the difficult times we are all going through on both a personal and professional level, it is very refreshing to know that our work as a society is making a difference in promoting patient care. This would not have been possible without the dedication and interest of BAGP members and guidance and hard work of its Council.

Dr Duaa Abu-Sinn (Council Member BAGP)

Research Award Update

Dr Rory Hammond was presented with the BAGP research project grant in 2019 for investigating molecular profiling of ovarian endometrioid carcinoma, focusing of L1 cell adhesion molecule (L1CAM). L1CAM has repeatedly shown to be associated with aggressive disease behaviour.
The team have collaborated and provided data which has resulted in a few papers.

A conference paper has been presented in Germany: "Immunhistochemische Expression von L1CAM in endometrioiden Ovarialkarzinomen – Ein neuer prognostischer Marker?" (DOI: 10.1055/s-0040-1718139) and a published article in clinical cancer research: "Endometrial Cancer Molecular Risk Stratification is Equally Prognostic for Endometrioid Ovarian Carcinoma". (DOI: 10.1158/1078-0432.CCR-20-1268)

Dr Alison Finall was presented with the BAGP research project grant in 2021, Project title: Correlation of inflammatory response, PD-L1 expression and microsatellite instability with five year survival data in endometriosis-associated ovarian cancer (EAOC) patients.



Preliminary data shows that both endometrioid and clear cell types of ovarian malignancy do not tend to show tumour cell PD-L1 marker expression using SP263 clone in our cohort.

What expression with PDL1 is observed appears to be located within macrophage and lymphocyte cytoplasm and for most would give a low combined positive score (it will vary depending upon your scoring algorithm, area versus cell number based denominator). What has been very interesting to note as an unexpected observation is that PDL1 is expressed by adjacent atypical endometriosis in the same patient samples that don't have malignant tumour cell expression.

What this means is unclear and we have yet to analyse the correlating clinical follow up data relating to these particular patients. In addition, there are very few tertiary lymphoid structures present in these samples and where they are observed in tissue sections they are not at the immediate interface with the malignancy but in background ovarian tissue some distance to the tumour margin. MMR immunohistochemical staining has revealed only one case of possible protein deficiency in an endometrioid variant.

We started a longitudinal integrated foundation training programme (LIFT) as we commenced the study. We took the opportunity to include our F1 doctor, Dr Ramya Nitharsan in the work to give her a breadth of experience in cellular and molecular pathology. She has enjoyed the experience of so far and learned a lot about research methods and laboratory techniques that are new to her.

We still have to complete immunohistochemical staining of inflammatory cells and conduct MSI analysis on the Idylla platform. This remaining work has been put on hold just for the moment as our lab is experiencing a critical staffing shortage and our research arm have been moved into the main diagnostic lab to help make up the shortfall. The staffing shortages are related to the omicron wave of COVID infection sweeping the country and we are hoping to get back on our feet in the coming weeks as the situation improves. Despite this I am pleased with the work we have managed to complete so far and know that many pathology labs around the country are experiences similar problems with staffing. I thank you and the BAGP for your patience during these difficult times whilst we complete this interesting project that was only made possible with support from the BAGP.

Alison Finall, Wales

Looking forward to 2022 – BAGP Events

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We tweet each month, please follow us *@BAGPGynPath*

Key Dates

Research Award Applications: Closing date 12th May

E-poster Applications: Closing date for abstract submission: 31st March

Your Feedback

I'm a pathology trainee from Singapore.

I'm writing to thank you for being my proposer to join the BAGP as a trainee member earlier this year. There are so many excellent learning materials on the website, which make me feel so close to the excellent gynaecological pathologists through recordings of previous lectures. I need to apologize for this delayed appreciation, after so many months of benefit from the website.

Again, thank you very much

I am writing to thank you sincerely for setting up mock exam for the BMS candidates and helping us tackle the final reporting exam. The exam that took place in October was tough and intense. However, I am extremely pleased to inform you that I have been successful in this exam. This has opened many exciting opportunities and I am so proud to be working in the histopathology field. Please convey my gratitude to Raji and Rupali as well as other members.

The MMR guideline is fantastic !!!

The structure and format of the document is brilliant. Clear, concise, yet detailed enough to be of real practical use in everyday practice. This a model for all other types of interpretive guidelines to try to emulate.

This alone is worth several years of BAGP membership dues.