

President's News

Steve Wigmore



Few will argue that 2020 has been a quite extraordinary year. COVID has presented challenges for us all individually, for our patients and for our day to day work.

We are well aware that many of our members have gone above and beyond the call of duty to keep patients safe, to keep services running and in some cases to take up different roles at the height of the pandemic. You and we should all take some pride in what has been achieved during this difficult time and as we face a winter full of uncertainty and new pressures of a potential increase in virus cases.

It is quite appropriate that our congress is themed "Resilience" and Lisa Burnapp, Dale Gardiner and the organizing committee have done a great job in planning what will be a new departure for us all, a joint BTS NHSBT virtual Congress (details below). What I would like to do is to urge you to do your best to attend this meeting. Our meeting is a key feature and the lifeblood of the society. I hope that you will plan ahead, apply for study leave and join us for our congress as a way of updating yourselves and supporting our society. We can promise an excellent line-up of speakers and a high quality delivery platform.

I am delighted to tell you that the UK Organ Donation and Research Network is attracting a lot of support and interest and we hope that they will be able to announce some grant funding successes in the next months for studies that encourage wide participation from the organ donation and transplantation communities.

Best wishes and stay safe



Congress Live 2021

24th & 25th February

Online Event

Registration is now open for Congress Live 2021

As you know, the British Transplantation Society and NHSBT Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation have joined forces again to bring you a Joint Congress from 24th to 25th February 2021.

It will be a new experience in the world of virtual reality but, a key difference between the Congress and your day-to day on-line experience, is that the programme will be delivered to you using a bespoke studio and on-line platform so that you can enjoy 'live' plenary sessions, on-line parallel sessions and catch-up with content on-demand- all included in your registration.

The Congress theme of 'Resilience' was an obvious choice given the year everyone has experienced. In response to your feedback and to make the most of the collaboration between the donation and transplantation communities, we have produced a fully integrated two-day programme featuring all your favourite content.

Your original contributions make our Congress every year, so we look forward to receiving the usual submissions of original abstracts for consideration as oral or poster presentations.

We recognise that downtime with friends and colleagues is an important part of our meeting and it is more difficult to recreate this virtually. With this in mind, we will include opportunities for informal networking events and each day will be rounded off with traditional award presentations, including the NHSBT/BTS 'Excellence in Organ Donation and Transplantation Awards' and BTS Medawar Medal, Roy Calne, Calne-Williams and Allied Healthcare Professional Awards.

The Congress is always a special occasion with time to develop social and personal networks and re-kindle friendships with colleagues. Although we will not be face to face, there is no better way to reflect on our practice, promote our knowledge and understanding and improve our resilience.

So, please make sure you join us in February.

Find all Congress 2021 information on our website

bts.org.uk/events-meetings/bts-nhsbt-congress-live-2021



BTS COVID-19 Updates

Throughout the first wave of the pandemic we provided regular updates to the BTS membership, developed guidance and provided access to resources to support the clinical community. We will continue to do this as the situation develops and through any subsequent surges of the virus.

I am indebted to the Executive and members of Council -particularly Ellie Asgari, Gareth Jones and Chris Callaghan who support me in regular review and updating of the guidance documents and development of new resources. We also thank the Centre of Evidence in Transplantation for allowing free access to the Transplant Library during this period.

Latest COVID-19 updates and resources can be accessed here:

bts.org.uk/information-resources/covid-19-information

The Secretary's Corner

Election time is here again! Whilst the result may not have quite the global impact of that awaited in Washington, this year there are many posts becoming vacant on the Executive, Council and Committees.

Nominations will open in November for the following positions:

Executive

Vice-President and General Secretary

Council

Councillors for Organ Retrieval, Liver Transplantation, Hepatology,
Donor Coordination, Transplant Surgery (heart) and Transplant Surgery (lung)

Committee membership

Education, Ethics, Clinical Trials & Research

Please consider standing, and if you decide not to stand on this occasion then please vote!



UKODTRN update

I hope by now that all BTS members are aware of the UK organ donation and transplantation research network, which we have been developing over the last couple of years.

I am delighted that we are now supported by a project manager, Neerja Jain, who is a Programme manager for Kidney Research UK, and is working with us to raise the profile of the network, to set up an online profile and to start data collection about ongoing studies.

All transplant centre leads were recently invited to nominate an individual who will be centre representative for the initiative, providing us with a network of interested individuals who can keep us updated about local research projects, which can then be entered into a national database. We would be grateful if those who have not responded would do so, so that we can be in touch with centre representatives.

We have been working with individuals and groups at the time of grant application, offering support from the network.

I am also delighted that my co-director, Maddy Warrens, is working with patients and patient groups to set up a patient advisory group for the network, so that patients' voices will be central as we focus discussions on research priorities, but also to provide support to researchers during the development of research projects.

Tony Dorling will be taking forward work which explores ways to "cut the red tape" when setting up a clinical trial, as we have seen how agile we can be in doing this when we need do in the SARS COV-2 era.

Please do get in touch with us if you are interested in being involved in the network.

Neerja would be pleased to hear from you: NeerjaJain@kidneyresearchuk.org

Please remember that the network encompasses organ donation and all organs for transplantation, but we are grateful to KRUK for providing material support.



Winter Ethics Symposium

Health Inequalities & Transplantation

Online Event

Thursday 3rd December 2020. 16:00-19:00

This year's Winter Ethics Symposium will be held online on Thursday 3 December and will be entitled 'Inequalities in Transplantation'.

The programme will incorporate the Hoffenberg Memorial Lecture, and will examine issues including:

- the role of organ allocation schemes in ensuring equity of access to transplantation
- the impact of deprivation on health inequalities – and the duties of transplant professionals
- health inequalities in BAME communities
- the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on inequalities in transplantation

We hope that you will be able to join us online on 3 December; the full programme and registration details will be available from mid-October.





Notes from the Treasury

This is perhaps the easiest bit of the Newsletter to write because of the fiscal miracles performed by Rachel Hilton, who finished her term as Treasurer in March. Rachel brought stability to the BTS finances in a challenging time for many professional societies, and I know I speak for the whole society in thanking her for such an important contribution.

I am pleased to say that 2019-2020 has continued the trend of the previous year, and we are likely to end 2020 in a better financial position than in 2019. In particular the 2020 Annual Congress was a great success, thanks in no small part to the support of all the members who travelled to Belfast to take part in the meeting.

The 2021 BTS Live meeting will be a very different experience, but no less valuable. **Please check out the website** and don't forget to register early!

A huge positive in a difficult year has been the committed support of our Corporate Partners, and I am delighted that in 2021 we will have 3 Gold partners – Astellas, Hansa Biopharma, and Novartis / Sandoz – with the continued support of Chiesi as a Silver partner. All of our Gold partners will be sponsoring symposia at BTS Live and we are already working closely to develop a fantastic program for these sessions – another reason to register for BTS Live now!

Finally it is the membership renewal season. Please look out for e-mails from the membership services team and check that the details are correct. You will be pleased to see that we have been able to maintain the 2019-20 subscription rates with no increase.



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