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1. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In this Spring edition of the ESA Newsletter there is much to report to you, most of which you will have learnt of from the website and monthly e-News. The major issues are the upcoming Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) in Adelaide, preparations for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) during the ASM, and the formation of the New Zealand ILAE Chapter, all outlined below.

The Executive has been mostly occupied with a detailed review of the Society's financial position and membership regulations, issues that require the attention of members



Dr Simon Harvey, ESA President

and discussion at the AGM; you will receive information about these issues and proposals from the Executive, prior to the AGM.

The Secretariat has been busy processing over the last two months, processing 2007-8 subscriptions and liaising with conference organisers about the Adelaide ASM. This is in addition to ongoing work maintaining the website and databases. Regarding the ESA website, the Secretariat would be pleased to receive feedback from members about content, appearance and functionality of the website, as well as content that would be suitable to upload.

I look forward to seeing you all in Adelaide for a stimulating scientific meeting and lively AGM. □

2. MEMBERSHIP

Subscription renewals were sent to current and lapsed members in early July. Payments are being processed in response to these notices, in addition to those coming in with ASM registrations. Currently, 159 members are passionate and paid up for 2007-8, the target being to build on the current membership base of 300. A large membership base is necessary to maintain the relatively low subscription rates and continue as a credible organisation representing the interests of medical, nursing, scientific and allied health professionals working in epilepsy-related fields. In July, Simon Harvey wrote to the ANZ Association of Neurologists, Neurosurgical Society of Australasia, Australian Neuroscience Society, ANZ Child Neurology Society and Australian Psychology Association, advising of the multidisciplinary nature of our Society's membership and the desire to broaden our membership. Members are requested to encourage

their neurological, neurosurgical, nursing, psychiatry, neuropsychology, technologist and scientist colleagues working in epilepsy-related areas to consider joining the ESA. □

3. FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Society continues to operate at a loss and is gradually running down the large cash asset base that was accumulated through the late 1990s and early 2000s, largely due to commitments to important training and educational programs supporting our regional neighbours. A detailed financial statement and proposal from the Executive will be sent to members shortly, for consideration and discussion at the AGM. An increase in subscription rates, curtailing of major project expenses, and establishment of an ESA Foundation for fund raising will be proposed at the AGM. □

4. ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

Final preparations are being made by the local organising committee in Adelaide for the 22nd ASM in just over a month. As previously advertised, we have four international speakers presenting at the meeting: Dr Yoshi Inoue from Japan, Prof Orvar Eeg-Olofsson from Sweden, Prof Ilo Leppick from the USA, and Prof Christian Elger from Germany. Four symposia are scheduled on Status Epilepticus, The Interface between Sleep and Epilepsy, Psychiatry and Epilepsy, and Epilepsy in the Elderly. Over 60 abstracts were accepted for presentation and have been

allocated to poster and platform sessions. The ASM will be preceded by the ANZAN EEG Course. Online registration is open at

<http://www.sapmea.asn.au/conventions/esa2007/>

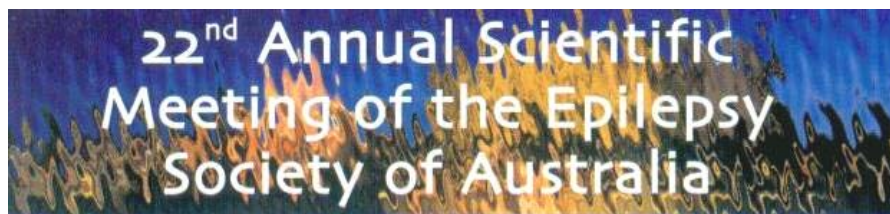
The Executive and ASM Committee hope the meeting will be well supported by members and their colleagues and trainees.

Sydney and Perth will host the 2008 and 2009 Annual Scientific Meetings, the local organisers being Dr Andrew Bleasel and Dr Lakshmi Nagarajan. The ESA is tendering for a professional conference organiser to manage both meetings. Your comments about specific PCOs would be welcomed by the Executive, in advance of making a decision later in the year. Suggestions for invited speakers and symposia topics should be sent to Andrew and Lakshmi. □

5. INTERNATIONAL MATTERS

The New Zealand Chapter of the ILAE was accepted into the League at their AGM in July. The office bearers are Dr Peter Bergin (President), Dr Elizabeth Walker, Dr Lynette Sadleir and Dr Claire Spooner. Our two Executives met briefly in Singapore and agreed to arrangements between our Societies that will continue our close working relationships, including discounted registration for ASMs and Masterclasses, joint membership of standing committees as appropriate, and the potential for non-voting "Associate Membership" of the ESA by NZ ILAE Chapter members if desired.

This month, Prof David Reutens, Dr Jeremy Freeman and Dr John Archer presented the 2nd ASEPA Imaging in Epilepsy



22nd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Epilepsy Society of Australia
7th – 9th November 2007
Hilton Adelaide

<http://www.sapmea.asn.au/conventions/esa2007/>

Accommodation Booking Deadline Friday, 5 October 2007

workshop in the Philippines (sponsored by the ESA), and Dr Simon Harvey led a group of paediatric epileptologists from Asia to present Paediatric Epilepsy workshops in Nepal and Mumbai (sponsored by the ILAE).

The East Timor Epilepsy Project continues, with the last nurse training and community leader workshops held in the mountain village of Aileu, under the watchful eye of the Australian Army, who decided to pitch their camp in the grounds of the fire station where the community leader workshops were being held.

Dr Josephine Guttierrez, the 2006 ESA Asian-Oceanian Fellowship recipient, returned to the Philippines in July following her training at the Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney. Next month, Dr Parampreet Kharbanda, the 2005 Asian-Oceanian Fellowship recipient, will return to India after training at the Austin Hospital, Melbourne. Dr Jithangi Wanigasinghe is currently training at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, working in the paediatric video-EEG monitoring unit and epilepsy clinics. □

6. WEBSITE

Recent additions to the ESA website include a Research page listing Australian centres conducting epilepsy-related research, with a summary of their key research interests, contact details, and website link. This page aims to highlight medical research being undertaken by members, primarily for interested researchers and for potential donors. The content was abstracted from the groups' websites, so please contact Vera Kung if you wish to correct or add information, or recommend other groups for listing, as it is surely an incomplete list.

A detailed summary of the 2006 Melbourne ASM program is available in the Conference section, with several symposia presentations available for download. The same format is planned for the 2007 Adelaide ASM, hopefully with more presentations available for download.



Simon Harvey has compiled a list of internet-based resources that he uses in clinic and placed it on a Resource page. If members would like to add to this list, or comment on it's utility, please contact Vera Kung. The intention is to have a page of links to useful sites and resources that will assist you in day-to-day patient care, not to have a list of links to epilepsy sites with information for patients or doctors. Please have a look and send your comments and additions.

We are presently looking at developing an on-line membership database that will allow members to update their contact details, check their membership status, and potentially search for other member's practice details where approved. This will also allow us to restrict access to certain parts of the website to members after logging in. □

7. STANDING COMMITTEES

DRIVING Ernie Somerville, Simon Harvey and Stephen Davis met with officials from the National Transport Commission in Melbourne at the end of June. The NTC officials were receptive to the concerns of neurologists and agreed to incorporate our demands into their recommendations to State Driver Licensing Authorities and Transport Ministers. Recently, Ernie Somerville and John Dunne addressed a meeting in Fremantle of the heads of the State and territory driver licensing departments, a measure of the importance of the issue and the efforts of Ernie Somerville and his committee. We were given a good hearing and our concerns do appear to be understood and perhaps considered

reasonable. However, it remains to be seen whether this will translate into action.

PREGNANCY The Pregnancy Register is continuing to recruit patients, with enrolments steady over the past four years. The latest outcome report on 1020 outcomes has been accepted by The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology for publication. The new finding that a year's seizure freedom prior to becoming pregnant was associated with a 70-80 per cent lower risk of having seizures in pregnancy and post-partum was presented at the Rhodes Meeting of the Neurological Society and the full report has been accepted by *Epilepsia* in September 2007. The examination of babies and assessment of the cognitive outcome in the 2 year old cohort has commenced and selection of the 7 year old cohort has begun, to undergo neuropsychological tests. Cooperation with EURAP continues with direct contact and transmitting prospectively enrolled cases.

DRUGS AND DEVICES Following retirements of Mark Newton, Christine Kilpatrick and Simon Harvey from the Drugs and Devices committee, the membership of this committee welcomes Terry O'Brien, Geoff Herkes and Joe Frasca. The retiring members are thanked for their time, effort and expertise.

The TGA has enquired of the ESA for advice on ECG monitoring during phenytoin intravenous infusion. There have been different protocols regards this in Australian practice e.g. at several large private hospitals in Brisbane admission to ICU is required. Submissions on this and other matters are invited from members prior to the annual meeting.

Product discontinuations and temporary shortages of intravenous

antiepileptic drugs have been a problem recently, and concern for the ESA. The ESA wrote to Mayne Pharma raising concern about these issues, and the need for discussion with the ESA. The MSAC application for VNS procedural items is still being considered by Medicare.

ENSIGA The Epilepsy Nurse Special Interest group meets annually as part of the ESA Scientific meeting and many Epilepsy Nurses meet throughout the year at various state based nursing education forums. A regular newsletter and general email correspondence keeps the group informed and promotes liaison and sharing of resources. The group provides excellent opportunities for epilepsy nurses to continue their professional development.

The annual ENSIGA symposium is occurring as part of the ESA scientific meeting in Adelaide on Wednesday the 7th November 07 from 08.30 -1300hrs.

It provides a forum for Epilepsy nurses to present their current work in a series of short presentations as well as guest speakers to speak on a variety of interesting topics.

We encourage all members to promote and help organise interested nurses to participate. For any enquiries about any aspect of the group please contact Janet Graham at:

janet.graham@med.monash.edu.au □

8. AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications closed on August 31st for the Molly McDonnell Research Scholarship and the UCB Clinical Epilepsy Scholarship.

These are currently being considered by the Executive and Education Committees, and will be presented at the ASM in November. The ESA is grateful for the financial support provided by the Molly McDonnell Foundation and UCB Pharma for these valuable scholarships.

The ESA Executive has awarded two Bladin Prizes this year, to be presented to the eminent members at the ASM.

ESA Travel Scholarships were awarded to Sarah Velissaris, Sophia Halley and Carlo Solinas to present papers at the IEC in Singapore. The ESA is currently considering applications for Travel Scholarships to attend the American Epilepsy Society. Clearer guidelines were drafted for these scholarships and are on the website.

Applications are still open for the 2008 Asian Oceanian Fellowship, to support a neurologist from Asia or Oceania to train at an Australian centre of their choice. Applications close October 31. If members receive enquiries from Asian trainees who wish to train at their centre, please suggest they consider applying for this fellowship, especially if you have met the potential trainee and support their application.

Details for all these scholarships, including closing dates, are on the ESA website. Reminders are frequently posted in the News section of the website and are

Going somewhere?

If your contact details have changed, please remember to let us know by emailing

enquiries@epilepsy-society.org.au

emailed close to closing dates. □

9. CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

The International Epilepsy Congress was held in Singapore in July and was well supported by Australian and New Zealand delegates and speakers. Twelve ESA members were involved in organisation and/or presentation at main symposia and parallel sessions. Congratulations are extended to Dr Radwa Badawy (Austin Health) who won a Young Investigators Award at the IEC.

Program details for the 7th AOEC being held in Xiamen, China from May 15-18, 2008 are available on the conference website

<http://www.epilepsyxiamen2008.org/>

No word has been received yet from the ILAE-IBE about Australia's bid for the 2010 Asian Oceanian Epilepsy Congress, other than it being down to a vote between Australia and the Philippines. If Australia is successful, the team from the ILAE-IBE International Director of Meetings will then investigate suitable cities and venues in Australia. □

10. OTHER NEWS

The Joint Epilepsy Council of Australia (JECA), the Australian chapter of the IBE, recently compiled results from a national survey of "Life with Epilepsy", the survey results intended to drive social research and policy decisions for JECA in the future. A copy of the survey is available from JECA. Jacinta Cummins (JECA President) and Russell Pollard (JECA Secretary) met with Federal Government officials recently to discuss a national education and awareness program, adoption of the WHO global campaign initiatives,

development of a model for epilepsy management in aboriginal communities, the issue of comprehensive epilepsy centres, generic substitution by pharmacists, formal recognition of epilepsy counsellors, and issues related to a national transport policy. □

11. UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 3-7

Idiopathic Generalized Epilepsy (IGE): Developmental Aspects, Bridging Basic Science and Clinical Research
Antalya, Turkey

October 5-6

Movement Disorder Society of Australia
Gold Coast, Queensland

November 3-4

Australasian Tuberculous Sclerosis Society
Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, New South Wales

November 5-6

ANZAN EEG Course
Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide

November 7-9

22nd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Epilepsy Society of Australia
Hilton Adelaide, Adelaide

2008

May 15-18

7th Asian & Oceanian Epilepsy Congress
Xiamen, China

Details for these conferences, and others, can be found at

<http://www.epilepsy-society.org.au/pages/conferences.php> □