



MINUTES OF THE ULTRASOUND ADVISORY GROUP (UAG) HELD ON THURSDAY 12TH MAY 2011, AT THE OFFICES OF THE SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS, 207 PROVIDENCE SQUARE, LONDON SE1 2EW

PRESENT: Julie Burnage {JB}
Jean Carter {JC}
Elizabeth Chapman {EC}
David Cole {DC}
Vivien Gibbs {VG}
Alison Hall {AH}
Margo McBride {MMB} {Chair}
Crispian Oates {CO}
Suzanne Poulton {SP}
Michael Purdon {MP}
Wendy Williams {WW}

IN ATTENDANCE: Nigel Thomson {NT}
Valerie Asemah {VA} {Minutes}

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and brief introductions were made, especially for the benefit of new members who were attending their first meeting; David Cole, Alison Hall, Suzanne Poulton and Michael Purdon.
- 1.2 The Chair stated that she was honoured to be Chair of this group and apologised for not being able to attend her first meeting but this was due to a long-standing commitment.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Trish Chudleigh, Gerry Johnson and Audrey Paterson.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18TH NOVEMBER 2010

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18th November 2010, were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING OTHERWISE NOT ON THE AGENDA

4.1 Planning the 2011 Study Day (minute 3.1)

NT informed the group this study day will be held on 16th November 2011 although the venue in Bristol is yet to be confirmed. VG has organised the programme on MSK U/S. It was agreed that NT would liaise with Claire Brown, Conference Manager to confirm venue details.

ACTION: NT

NT asked the group to email suggestions and topics for the next study day in May 2012.

ACTION: GROUP

4.2 RCOG Training (minute 5.1)

NT gave an update with respect to the RCOG training programme which is supported by the SCoR and has been endorsed by BMUS. He drew attention to the wording of the joint statement which refers to the liaison and resource issues that need to be taken into account. He asked that if members of the group were aware of specific problems to let him know. He also informed the group that he would be unable to attend the 'Training the Trainers' meeting at the RCOG on 16th May due to annual leave but VG and Audrey Paterson {AP} would be attending. AP will attend the morning session only. Monitoring of the RCOG training programme is an on-going task.

ACTION: NT & GROUP

4.3 FASP CRL/NT Measurements (minute 7.1)

TC was unable to attend the meeting so could not give a report but NT updated the group with respect to current FASP advice. TC is currently working on this issue with FASP and will report at the next meeting in November 2011. Many departments use CRL up to 84mm and then HC for the dating aspects of the first screening scan.

ACTION: TC

4.4 Updating 1995 SCoR sale of images/determination of fetal sex advice (minute 9.1)

NT informed the group that this document is in its final draft form and is with the Director of Professional Policy who will present it to Council for final approval.

Post meeting note: Approved by Council at its June meeting.

4.5 Umbilical artery Doppler/liquor volume (NICE hypertension) project (minute 12.1)

JC updated the group that 8 expressions of interest in undertaking a literature review had been received from various organisations and individuals. The tender document has been finalised and sent to those who expressed an interest with a closing date of 27th May.

ACTION: NT & AP

4.6 Any other business (minute 16.2)

AT the last meeting Regina Fernando {RF} had queried the accuracy of an article in Synergy News (September 2010) relating to the date the then CPSM had changed its stance on radiographer reporting which NT had agreed to query. AP has been in contact with Deeson's and RF and it is believed that this has now been dealt with.

5. ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM (AAA) SCREENING

- 5.1 CO reported that the AAA Advisory Group has been disbanded and no longer exists, although a new board is to be convened. AAA screening continues to be rolled out across England. The measurement of 'inner to inner' has been finalised. AAA roll out in Scotland has been delayed by a year.

CO said that he would write to Jonathan Earnshaw suggesting that a National Recommendation for inner to inner measurement is used by everyone as many hospitals still use outer to outer.

6. CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) UPDATE

- 6.1 NT updated the group that the CQC continues to have a major impact on sonographers working independently; this also applies to radiographers, vascular scientists and cardiac physiologists. It is a legal requirement for those offering independent services in England to be registered with the CQC but this does not apply to employees, only to the legal body or entity providing services. There was a fees consultation towards the end of last year to which the SCoR responded with independent practitioners now being charged £1500 per annum for a single 'location'. Many independents were very unhappy with the level of fees and it has particularly impacted on the DEXA scanner members of the SCoR. It appears that chiropractors will not be charged this registration fee as they are exempt from registration as are physiotherapists undertaking ultrasound examinations. The SCoR has been informed that pure 'souvenir baby scanning' providers will need to register with the CQC.

Following discussion the point was stressed that anyone working as an independent and who is not an employee or otherwise exempt must be registered with the CQC by law if working in England. The SCoR is hoping to arrange a meeting with the CQC to discuss fees.

7. THE FUTURE OF ULTRASOUND TRAINING

- 7.1 There was some concern from the group over the education of sonographers as it appears that there may be fewer sonographers being trained. The SCoR is very aware of this (as is BMUS) and has previously published documents relating to the sonographer shortage (as have BMUS). The SCoR continues to try and influence decision makers in government and at regional level at every opportunity. The proposed changes to the NHS will not help the situation with the abolition of SHA's and there being no direct provision for postgraduate education. The SCoR is responding to a Migrations Advisory Council consultation with respect to sonographers continuing to be recognised as a shortage profession.

8. GROUP'S DIRECTION AND IMPACT

- 8.1 This was an agenda item from TC who was unavailable for comment. NT will ask TC to circulate an email to the group with any comments or concerns. NT reminded the group that this is an advisory group rather than a policy one but we would like it to be as high profile as possible.

ACTION: NT & TC

9. THE PUBLIC VOLUNTARY REGISTER OF SONOGRAPHERS - UPDATE

- 9.1 NT recapped for the group setting out what this is and how it all started and brought them up to date with what is currently happening. There are currently 945 voluntary registrants. It is hoped to re-launch the register later this year as an *assured* voluntary register following publication of the Command Paper 'Autonomy and Accountability for Health Care Workers, Social Works and Social Care Workers', Feb 2011. Legal advice will be required and will also be taken to SCoR Council. The Command Paper states that no new groups will be brought into statutory registration and the HPC have now issued a notice to this effect. The SCoR working group includes AP, TC, WW, NT and Malcolm Sperrin (Physicist). Group will be kept updated.

10. EXPECTED DH DOCUMENT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ULTRASOUND

10. NT informed the group that this DH document is in its final draft and when finalised he will email to all members of the group for their comments.

ACTION: NT

11. INTIMATE EXAMINATIONS/CHAPERONE POLICY/DIRECT AND INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

- 11.1 The group discussed a letter published in Synergy News in November 2010 and reply drafted by NT and Sean Kelly that related to past problems for male radiotherapy students when learning techniques such as cervical brachytherapy. Over the years there have been similar concerns raised by male sonographers or potential male sonography trainees with respects to intimate examinations such as endovaginal ultrasound or O/G ultrasound in general. Some comments made have been examples of either direct or indirect discrimination. It has been agreed by the SCoR Professional Team that Sean Kelly (Professional Officer) and NT would write a draft 'Intimate Examinations and Chaperones' policy that would apply to all branches of the profession. This would be based on current advice from the GMC and RCR and would be circulated for comment. The passing of the 'Equality Act' 2010 by Parliament was noted.

ACTION: NT

12. RCOG TRAINING UPDATE

- 12.1 To note the RCOG Training update. This was discussed under 4.2 above.

13. UAG PROJECT (NICE CG107 HYPERTENSION IN PREGNANCY) UPDATE

- 13.1 To note the UAG project update. This was discussed under 4.5 above.

14. SECOND OPINION/COMMENT ON REPORTS

- 14.1 A query was raised at a recent study day with respect to how a second opinion or comment should be formally recorded on a report. This was discussed by the group with examples of individual practice being given. Group members are asked to forward any specific local protocols or procedures they may have to NT with a view to formal guidance being prepared.

ACTION: NT & GROUP

15. RECENT CONSULTATION AND SCoR SURVEYS

- 15.1 All recent formal consultations and SCoR surveys were noted:

- FASP Model of Best Practice, second round (Closed)
- NICE Multiple pregnancy guidelines (Closed)
- CQC fees (Closed)
- Scottish AAA screening (Closed)
- Gynae on-line survey (Closed 20/4)
- Workforce on-line survey (Closed 10/5) (Linked to MAC consultation below)
- UK Borders Agency Migration Advisory Committee (via Warren Town) Due 1/6

16. BMUS LIAISON MEETINGS

- 16.1 NT updated the group on the recent meeting between SCoR and BMUS which takes place every 6 months. There is another meeting due on 24th May 2011.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 17.1 VG asked whether there would be a report on the Kinghorn meeting in London on the prevention of Musculo-skeletal disorders (3rd March) and queried whether this had been done. NT will follow up.

ACTION: NT

- 17.2 To note that HSE has just published a document on how limb disorders should be described called 'Improving the Diagnostic Criteria for work-related upper limb disorders for use in prevention and patient care'.

- 17.3 The SVT are about to undertake a survey of their members regarding the RSI problem with a view to finding out the extent of it and the factors that may precipitate or mitigate that risk. NT suggested that CO also contact Lyn Wigley, the SCoR Health and Safety Officer.

- 17.4 WW informed the group that the Welsh Assembly Government had instructed Antenatal Screening Wales (ASW) to implement a first trimester combined screening test for Down's which includes Nuchal Translucency scanning.

- 17.5 NT queried whether anyone had yet had a look at the new NICE guidelines on ovarian cancers and if so to please let him have their comments.

ACTION: GROUP

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 18.1 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 24th November 2011, to be held at the Society of Radiographers, commencing at 1.00pm (sandwich lunch available from 12.30pm).