

Clinical Research & Academic Committee
Minutes of Meeting held by Telephone Conference on
Wednesday 19 January 2011

1. In Attendance:
Patrick Chinnery (Chair), Martin Rossor, Heather Angus-Leppan, Ralf Gregory, Huw Morris, Rustam Al-Shahi Salman, Dan Blackburn
2. Apologies:
Martin Brown
3. Minutes of Last Meeting:
The minutes from the previous meeting were considered an accurate record.
4. ABN Fellowships Scheme
PFC updated the committee on the progress of the Fellowship scheme, describing the 4 successful Fellowships awarded after interview in July 2010. Funding will be available for a further iteration of the scheme in 2011, and the organisation of this was discussed. There was general agreement that the approach was satisfactory and should continue along the same vein. RASS raised questions about the scoring scheme itself. PFC will circulate the scores to RASS for his comment as to whether a scale with more increments would provide a more reliable measure for shortlisting.
Action: PFC to discuss with Karen Reeves at the ABN office and initiate the launch of the scheme in 2011.
5. The Research Forum
DB discussed the 2 previous formats used for the ABNT research forum. The committee discussed the pros and cons of the didactic lecturer approach and the poster approach. It was agreed that the poster session was helpful, but an introduction with a discussion about possible funding schemes would also be helpful. DB, PFC and RG will discuss in the meetings committee at the ABN office in the last week of January.
6. The ABNT are currently scoping the possibility of developing a website based upon the UK research networks specifically for trainees. DB will report to CRAC following the pending ABNT meeting.
7. Technology Assessment Grant Calls
The Health Technology Assessment Panel of NIHR have asked CRAC for suggestions for future grant calls. These should be specific, relate to areas of gaps in clinical knowledge, and lead to an advance in understanding that would influence clinical management of patients with neurological diseases. PFC has forwarded the web link to allow CRAC members to upload their suggestions. PFC would be pleased to receive suggestions from the CRAC membership that he would be able to forward to the HTA advisory board.
8. Intercalated Degree Bursaries
Two awards were made last year. The number of applications was poor last year. It was agreed that advertisements to the membership and medical schools should make it explicit that the award is for intercalated degrees for medical students, specifically not referring directly to BMedSci degrees which are not available throughout the UK.
9. RA-SS submitted a report on BNSU activity in 2010, and summarised the report. GBS and encephalitis lethargica surveillance stopped, LEMS surveillance started; CCDDs and young onset PD surveillance ongoing. Annual reports received from CCDDs, young onset PD, GBS, and encephalitis lethargica. Unsure if LEMS was approached. Autosomal dominant inherited dementias approved, pending. Applications awaited on influenza-associated neurological disease (Solomon), moya-moya (Brown), and mitochondrial diseases (Turnbull).

Action points:

- 9.1 BNSU presence on ABN website needs to be streamlined and clearly signposted (Action: KR, RA-SS, and Thinking Fish).
- 9.2 Mail-out to only UK BNSU members still awaiting completion (Action: KR and Thinking Fish).
- 9.3 CRAC approved two developments to BNSU:

(a) when an ABN member reports having seen a condition under surveillance, the investigator approaching them for more details should be provided with the reporting ABN member's secretary (though MR noted the frequency with which they may change). Action: KR, RA-SS, and Thinking Fish. RA-SS pointed out that

ABN members should be approached on an annual basis to update their details (including secretary's email address) in the ABN database, and this should be automated (Action: KR, RA-SS, and Thinking Fish)

(b) an instant mail-back of study materials from BNSU, at the time a neurologist reports seeing a condition under surveillance

9.4 PFC and CH to pursue NIHR/CLRN partner organisation status for BNSU

9.5 RG to allocate a session at the Gateshead ABN meeting to the BNSU, constituting: a report on BNSU from RA-SS, brief presentations from active or recent studies, and a comment on future directions and opportunities.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be in 6 months' time by teleconference, date and time to be decided.

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