



Thyroid NewsLetter

Published by the British Thyroid Association

Encouraging the Highest Standards of Research and Patient Care

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the Spring issue of the BTA newsletter. I hope you are all keeping well, both mentally and physically, as we enter our eleventh month of 'the pandemic that keeps on taking'. The government do seem finally to have got their act together in understanding that mass vaccination is now the UK's best chance of suppressing this virus to manageable levels, and this does provide me hope that our home and working lives may return to some degree of normality in the next 6 months.

I was delighted with the turn-out of more than 300 people for the first ever 'virtual' **BTA annual meeting** in December. I imagine that the inaugural members of the first 'Thyroid Club' dinner in 1950 would have been bewildered both by some of the molecular biology content of the lectures and by the advanced communication technology! Nevertheless, the trainee presentations of interesting and unusual patients would have been instantly familiar. I found this to be a great strength in our meeting and by continuing to engage trainees in this way, I hope we can build the membership of BTA for future years. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Secretary, Carla Moran, for doing a fantastic job organising this new style event and getting to grips with the online platform, and also to Colin Dayan for making the trainee presentations interactive and informative.

Looking back to 2016, I was surprised to read a NICE intervention appraisal for radiofrequency ablation (RFA) of thyroid nodules (IPG562)¹, largely because I was unaware of any NHS centre performing this

procedure at that time. Fast-forward to the present and **ETA have recently released guidelines for use of image-guided ablation of benign thyroid nodules²** which encompass RFA, laser thermal ablation, high-frequency ultrasound ('HIFU') and microwave techniques. On one level, these developments seem to me like a procedure looking for an indication, as guidelines require that these nodules have to be proven benign before such intervention should be considered. Nevertheless, I can see that it may present a new and potentially more acceptable option for a small number of patients with substantial benign nodule(s) causing compression symptoms, for whom surgery is unacceptable or undesirable. Radiologists at several UK centres are now starting to gain experience at doing this, but availability remains patchy. These procedures are also starting to be used in other European countries for treatment of nodal or locally recurrent disease in people with thyroid cancer, although numbers are currently low and long-term follow up will be key for this emerging indication. I'd be grateful if you might **let me know if this service is available** to your patients locally, so BTA might keep a list of NHS centres with expertise in these niche procedures.

It seems relevant to note that this is the first BTA newsletter to be circulated since **Brexit**. Whatever your personal take on this disastrous political development, with our BTA Secretary based in Dublin, our many personal links to European colleagues and our professional affiliations with ETA, I feel it important that we maintain or strengthen

our clinical and research interactions with continental colleagues. I have personally only had very positive and enriching interactions from attending ETA meetings and I'd thoroughly recommend that you consider engaging with ETA if you haven't already.

Please note that BTA now has a Twitter presence @ThyroidBritish, please do

interact with the account and please let us know if you would like to promote a study, publication or a local event via this forum.

Simon Pearce, BTA President

Citations

1. www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ipg562
2. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7445670/

From the Secretary

BTA Meeting 2021

Following the success of our virtual meeting last year, we have decided to hold the annual BTA meeting as a virtual event again this year. The meeting will be held over two days, **Thursday 20th & Friday 21st May**, and will run from lunchtime to early evening both days. We will retain the core elements of the meeting, with a George Murray lecture, trainee sessions, symposia and clinical and scientific abstracts. Of note, **registration will be open only to BTA members**, so please do encourage your colleagues and trainees who may wish to register to [become a BTA member](#).

Abstracts for BTA Meeting 2021

Please consider submitting your work as scientific abstracts to me by [email](#), as a word document, no longer than 250 words, **Deadline 9th April 2021**. We will have a clinical cases session again; details to follow at a later date.

Update from the British Thyroid Foundation

Virtual patient meetings and updates

We are continuing to host our series of 'Meet the Thyroid Expert' webinars which have been popular with patients, families and medical professionals who value this unique opportunity to learn from our speakers.

In response to calls from our members, who ask us to do more to promote key messages

New BTA Secretary

I am delighted to welcome Professor Bijay Vaidya to his new role as assistant secretary. Prof Vaidya will take up office as BTA secretary this summer. We would also like to hear from members who would like to join our executive committee, so if you are interested please contact me.

Website

We are in the process of updating the website. If you have any thoughts or suggestions on how we can improve it please let me know. If you use it, please also let me know why, and if it serves the purpose you had in mind.

Carla Moran, BTA Secretary,
cm682@medschl.cam.ac.uk

to primary care doctors, we will be running a **webinar aimed specifically at GPs**. This free event and held on Monday 22 March between 7.30pm and 8.30pm.

The speakers will be Prof Kristien Boelaert and Prof Simon Pearce, and Dr Anh Tran will kindly chair the meeting. You can find more information about this meeting by following this [link](#).

Please share details of this opportunity with your GP colleagues and networks.

You can watch **previous BTF webinars**, which cover Thyroid Surgery, Thyroid Eye Disease and Thyroid Disorders in Children, on the [BTF YouTube channel](#).

If you have any suggestions about topics for future webinars please contact Julia Priestley. Julia.priestley@btf-thyroid.org

New HealthSketch for patients with thyroid disorders

Patients often tell us that when they are diagnosed with a thyroid disorder they are struggle to understand the information they are given and what it will mean for them. To help break down this often complex information into a format that is easy to

understand, we have collaborated with **HealthSketch** (<http://www.healthsketch.com/>) who make health explanation videos that are memorable and engaging. Since it was launched in November the film has already been viewed over 7.1K times. We hope you will find it is a [useful resource](#) for your patients.

BTF Covid-19 resources

To keep patients up to date and to answer many of the questions they have, we continue to add to our [Covid-19 resources](#). Recent articles posted have covered thyroid function tests during the pandemic and thyroid disease and Covid-19 vaccines.

Julia Priestley & Cheryl McMullan, BTF

FUTURE MEETINGS

- 19th [International Congress of Endocrinology](#) VIRTUAL, Feb 24-28th 2021
- 4th [World Congress on Thyroid Cancer](#), VIRTUAL meetings 13th March, 5th June, 16th October 2021
- [ENDO](#) VIRTUAL, 20-23rd March 2021
- BTA Meeting, VIRTUAL, 20-21st May 2021
- [eECE](#) VIRTUAL, 22-26th May 2021
- 43rd Annual [Meeting of the European Thyroid Association](#), VIRTUAL, Sept 4-7th 2021
- [European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology](#) VIRTUAL, Sept 22-26th 2021
- 90th Annual Meeting of the [American Thyroid Association](#), Arizona, USA, Sept 29th to Oct 3rd 2021
- [Society for Endocrinology](#) Annual Meeting, November 8-10th 2021