



# Thyroid NewsLetter

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Encouraging the Highest Standards of Research and Patient Care

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am thrilled to be writing this first message as **BTA president**: a most unexpected honour for me. Krishna Chatterjee showed exceptional leadership as BTA president, particularly steering us through the parliamentary hearing about the sensitive issue of T3. Enormous thanks go to him for his sound stewardship of BTA over the last 3 years. I admit to being apprehensive about my ability to fill his shoes.

It is a cliché to say that 2020 has provided **unprecedented challenges** for us all; many have suffered personal illness or bereavement, medics have been redeployed to care for patients with a hitherto unknown viral illness and researchers have been locked out of laboratories. These have been huge upheavals and I hope everyone has taken the time to relax and recuperate over the summer to get ready for a restart of our regular work under new conditions.

Over the last few months NHS outpatient endocrinology services seem to have taken to **telephone and video consultations** like a duck to water. I'm sure there is a lot of good sense in this for many patients, both in terms of convenience and the improved green credentials from reduced patient travel. It is obviously a perfect arrangement for many patients post-radioiodine, and indeed many clinics were already running on these lines. However, I do have concerns that patient satisfaction may be worse, particularly for more complex problems, and we should certainly try to capture patient feedback about this aspect straight away. I also worry that we may find ourselves handicapped by losing our clinician's sixth

sense, such as the signals of how ill a person is based on their 'demeanour', or the fleeting glance to the ceiling when you ask about alcohol. I'm also anxious that if remote consulting largely replaces face to face encounters throughout the NHS, this could lead for the first time since 1948 to an obvious double standard in care provision between the NHS and private medicine in the UK. It also gives enormous potential for outsourcing, the way many hospitals have already outsourced radiology or pathology reporting. Is anyone else wondering why Matt Hancock and friends are wholly embracing this "digital revolution"?

I'd like to alert members that along with many UK charities, **British Thyroid Foundation** have found themselves with very much reduced income following lockdown. Please think about supporting them personally and encouraging your patients to get involved or fundraise. In those uncertain weeks of early Spring, it was immensely helpful to be able to direct many of my patients with anxieties about having an autoimmune disease or taking carbimazole to the authoritative advice on their website and social media feeds. It feels more important than ever for us to continue to work synergistically with BTF.

Finally, new thyroid diseases don't happen very often. But as you have no doubt noticed, 2020 has also brought us '**post-COVID19 subacute thyroiditis**'. Several reports have emerged about this painless thyroiditis that in some, but not all cases appears to have the typical biphasic pattern. This can either develop during the acute

phase of COVID19 infection or a few weeks post infection, more like the usual 'post-infective' thyroiditis. I would recommend having a look at these two short papers: [Muller et al, Lancet Diab Endo](#) and

[Brancatella et al, JCEM](#), both available open access.

**Simon Pearce, BTA President**

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## From the Secretary

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### Future Meetings

Sadly, it was of course necessary to cancel our annual meeting in May this year. We plan to hold a **virtual BTA meeting**, containing key elements of the annual meeting, including the George Murray lecture, later in the year. Details are being finalised and will be emailed to members and posted on the [website](#) once available.

### BTA Secretary Role

We would like to invite applications from BTA members for the role of BTA secretary. The successful candidate will act as assistant secretary for one year, before taking up the role in 2021, for a three-year term. Those interested should contact me by [email](#).

### THESIS Survey

Many of you have responded to inform me that you are happy to take part **THESIS** (a survey capturing information on the management of hypothyroidism in Europe), however the response from UK physicians has been low overall. If you have not yet responded, but would be happy to complete the survey, please let me know by [email](#) as soon as possible. A simple "yes to THESIS" will suffice. Please note, by responding, you are consenting to me forwarding your email address to a study team member.

**Carla Moran, BTA Secretary,**  
[cm682@medschl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:cm682@medschl.cam.ac.uk)

## Update from the British Thyroid Foundation

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We are delighted to welcome Prof Simon Pearce as Ex-Officio BTF Trustee and look forward to his expert input during his office. Thank you to past BTA President Prof Krishna Chatterjee for his valuable support to the BTF over the years in this same role.

### BTF Research Award

The 2020 BTF Research Award winner is Prof Márta Korbonits of the William Harvey Research Institute at Queen Mary University of London. Prof Korbonits' study 'A Novel Cause of Medullary Thyroid Carcinoma' aims to establish whether groups of medullary thyroid cancer patients have abnormalities in the new gene her research team has identified.

We have unfortunately had to cancel the 2021 BTF Research Award. This is due to our reduced income brought about by Covid-19. Applications for the £20,000 award were due in January 2021. We will review this subject to our developing financial situation over the course of the year.

### Virtual patient meetings and updates

To replace face-to-face patient meetings, we have introduced 'Meet the Thyroid Expert' webinars. Our first webinar was hosted in July by Mr Jeremy Davis, thyroid surgeon and president of BAETS. It gave the opportunity for the 60+ attendees to hear from an expert, as well as have their questions answered. The next webinar will be on thyroid eye disease and hosted by Dr

Rachna Murthy and Dr Jonathan Roos in the autumn.

We would welcome any offers for future webinar speakers, as well as to record short videos addressing specific issues for patients. Please contact Julia Priestley for more information [Julia.priestley@btf-thyroid.org](mailto:Julia.priestley@btf-thyroid.org)

### **Covid-19 resources**

We have worked with the BTF, SfE and Thyroid Cancer Forum UK to develop a series of guidance and resources on Covid-19 for thyroid patients. To date this information has been viewed over 700,000 times from people

across the UK and further afield. Our medical query service has fielded a huge number of enquiries from concerned patients over the pandemic. We have been fortunate to have the support of Dr Petros Perros to assist with these queries. To gain an insight into patients' experiences of receiving information, care and support over the Covid-19 outbreak, we commissioned a survey into patient care and wellbeing. The 633 completed patient responses will now be reviewed and shared anonymously with medical professionals to help address concerns and improve patient care.

**Julia Priestley & Cheryl McMullan, BTF**

### **FUTURE MEETINGS (relevant links on BTA website)**

- 68th Annual BTA Meeting, 2020 **Changed to virtual conference, date to be confirmed**
- European Young Endocrinologists & Scientists meeting, September 4-6th 2020, Birmingham UK **POSTPONED to 2021**
- European Congress of Endocrinology **Virtual conference, eECE, 5-9th September 2020**
- International Thyroid Congress China Sept 8-13th, 2020 **POSTPONED**
- 59th Annual ESPE meeting, 2020 **Changed to virtual conference, ESPE Connect, 6-14th November**
- Society for Endocrinology Annual Meeting, 2020 **Changed to virtual conference, SfE BES Online, 16-20th November**
- 4th World Congress on Thyroid Cancer, Westin Boston Waterfront, Boston, USA, July 29th July to August 1st, 2021
- 43rd Annual Meeting of the European Thyroid Association, Milan, Italy, Sept 4-7th, 2021
- 90th Annual Meeting of the American Thyroid Association, Arizona, USA, Sept 29th to Oct 3rd, 2021