

THE 2005 ADIPS ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

The 2005 Annual Scientific Meeting was held in Darwin on 15 and 16 July in conjunction with the inaugural meeting of SOMANZ (The Society for Obstetric Medicine of Australia & New Zealand). We were delighted to welcome Professor Andreas Plagemann, Head of Division of “Experimental Obstetrics” at the Charite University Hospital in Berlin, Germany, as our invited international guest speaker, and Professor Caroline Crowther, Director of the Maternal, Perinatal Clinical Trials Unit in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Adelaide, as our invited national speaker. With the meeting being held in the Top End we also took the opportunity to focus on the issue of Indigenous health. We welcomed over 100 registrants to Darwin and enjoyed a very thought-provoking meeting.

Friday’s sessions were held in conjunction with SOMANZ whilst concurrent sessions were held on Saturday. Friday morning commenced with a session on “Fetal origins.” Professor Plagemann presented very elegant data both from laboratory and clinical studies on this topic which stimulated much discussion. Sue Sayers, a neonatologist and Senior Research Fellow at Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin, then presented findings from her Aboriginal Birth Cohort Study, commenced in 1987. Follow-up of the children at age 11 revealed that fasting glucose and insulin levels correlated with current body size rather than birth measures. David Simmons then presented the Maori and Pacific Island perspective on the fetal origins hypothesis, revealing some differences to findings in Indigenous Australians.

We continued the theme of Indigenous health and followed this session with an abstract session: “Diabetes in Pregnancy in Indigenous Australians.” Presentations were made by Mark Raines from Royal Darwin Hospital, Megan Halliday from Alice Springs Hospital and Diane Bond from Cairns Diabetes Centre. Aboriginal Health Worker Sumaria Corpus presented an excellent insight into her role in up-skilling remote health workers in diabetes and chronic disease management in the Top End.

After lunch we changed focus slightly to “Diabetic Nephropathy in Pregnancy.” Mark Brown presented the limited available data and David McIntyre then followed with some very interactive case presentations. This provided an opportunity for lively and stimulating discussion.

The final session of the day started with a presentation on “Obstetric Medicine in the Top End” by Margaret O’Brien (obstetrician and gynaecologist with the specialist outreach service of the Top End) and then Marcus Ilton (cardiologist, Royal Darwin Hospital). The day ended with a stimulating presentation by Professor Caroline Crowther on the currently available evidence (or lack thereof) to enable the practice of evidence-based medicine in the field of diabetes in pregnancy.

As per tradition, the conference dinner was held on Friday evening with over ninety guests attending. Pee Wee’s restaurant provided a beautiful harbour-side venue which was enjoyed by all (even if the food was on Territory time!).

Saturday’s sessions commenced with Professor Caroline Crowther presenting the findings of the landmark ACHOIS study regarding the benefits of treatment of gestational diabetes. A lively interactive panel discussion chaired by Aiden McElduff

and comprising of Professor Crowther, Janet Rowan, Janet Lagstrom and Ian Fulcher followed.

There were then two sessions of abstracts on Saturday. Wah Cheung presented on “The healthy lifestyle motherhood (HELM) program for reduction of diabetes risk following GDM” and then Leonie Callaway presented on “Incidence of diabetes in the 21 years following a pregnancy complicated by pre eclampsia- data from the Mater University of Queensland Study of Pregnancy.” David Simmons then presented on the work of the ADIPS pilot database with contributions from the audience as to what could be excluded from the revised data collection form. After lunch Liza Nery presented on “Fat distribution in the post-partum following a pregnancy complicated by gestational diabetes”, followed by Aiden McElduff on “Vitamin D deficiency is common in pregnant women in Sydney and may predispose to gestational diabetes,” and then Claire Parker on “Reliability of patient held blood glucose records.”

The final session on Saturday was titled “Breastfeeding in diabetic women” and commenced with Professor Plagemann presenting his interesting data on this topic. His recommendation was that “breastfeeding is good” but that further study regarding the effects of maternal hyperglycaemia on the baby was recommended. Di Howard followed this with a presentation on the challenges of postpartum glycaemic control in type 2 diabetes in Indigenous Australians. Deterioration in glycaemic control postpartum was significant and unfortunately rather common. The day finished with Elizabeth Johnson discussing breastfeeding in Maori women- providing many insights into Maori culture and barriers to breastfeeding.

The conference concluded on Saturday afternoon with David McIntyre announcing the winners of the Graz Clock award: Leonie Callaway (research) and Claire Parker (education). David then presented Professor Plagemann with a memento from the Top End- a yidaki (didgeridoo). There ended proceedings for 2005 and we look forward to 2006’s conference on the Gold Coast. Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to Mike Pickford and my co-organisers of the conference: David McIntyre, David Simmons, Di Howard, Martha Finn, Helen Lammi and Cherie Whitbread.

Louise Maple-Brown