

The history of the SAS Committee



It is nearly ten years since the inception of the SAS Committee. Kate Bullen was the first and only SAS doctor to be elected to the Council of the AAGBI. Those were the days when SAS doctors were more or less treated as a pair of hands and were not considered to be a part of the anaesthetists' hierarchy. Those were tough days.

We have come a long way. This is obvious from the strength of the SAS committee in the Council and its achievements during the last five years. It is growing from strength to strength. Several SAS colleagues have played a very important part in bringing us to where we are now.

I still remember clearly my first meeting at the Association. Three of us (Kate, Brenda Lobo and I) and a member of the administrative staff were at the meeting. It was a strange experience for me. We were wondering about what to do with the opportunity. Now the membership of the SAS committee comprises all the executive members of Council, three elected council members nominated by the President, a Chairman and six other SAS members including representatives from the RCOA, the BMA, Scotland and four other members of good standing chosen by the chairman and the committee. This demonstrates the importance of the committee within the Association and its genuine interest in the welfare of SAS doctors. The Chairman of the SAS committee is also co-opted to sit on other committees to improve SAS representation within the Council.

The SAS Committee now meets at least twice a year to discuss issues. The chairman is a co-opted member of the SAS Committee of the College. Both the SAS committees meet once a year at a joint meeting to discuss issues of common interest. The terms of reference of the committee include: advising council on matters relating to

SAS doctors, representing their interests, responding to enquiries from the SAS members, encouraging the professional development and to ensure collaboration with other professional bodies on issues of mutual interest, such as our own college, other colleges and the BMA.

CPD activities

The SAS committee organizes two seminars annually dealing with academic and medico-political issues at 21 Portland Place. On alternate years the Association conducts an 'SAS Joint Review Day' in association with the SAS Committee of the RCOA. The SAS Committee organizes a session regularly at the AAGBI's Annual Congress. This was originally started as a lunch time session which has now become regular. These sessions have been extremely successful and well attended. For the first time this year SAS committee is organizing a 2-day current topic meeting which includes dinner and entertainment on the first day. From time to time the Committee organizes seminars on management and job planning issues.

The SAS committee has its own page in the Association's magazine 'Anaesthesia News' which includes regular contributions from members. This acts as a forum for those who want to express their ideas on any topic related to SAS doctors. Members can utilise this page to promote their views and publish profiles of colleagues who contribute to anaesthetics in a significant way. Anthea Mowat was awarded the Pask Certificate in 2009 for her contribution to SAS cause.

Publications

The committee published the 'SAS Handbook' three years ago which was extremely popular and well received by members. The decision to publish a

second edition of the Handbook has just been taken. This publication has been a good reference source for SAS issues. The committee produced the latest edition of the SAS Contract glossy in 2009. It has guidance on both new and old contracts. It has also produced guidance 'regarding to associate specialist grade' this year. From time to time documents are produced which are relevant to the work and lives of SAS doctors.

Over the last two years, the SAS Committee has instituted two major awards: the SAS Research and Audit prize and the SAS Travel grant, to encourage doctors to contribute. These are exclusive grants for SAS doctors awarded annually. It is important that more and more members take advantage by applying in large numbers to prove that SAS doctors are keen on research and other additional activities.

The Committee runs the SAS website which includes very useful information.

There is still a lot to be done and to be achieved. The Committee owes its success to all the Presidents and the members of the Council of the Association and the members of the SAS Committee who have given immense support and continue to do so. None of the success would have been possible without this support. It has been a pleasure and privilege to be a part of the SAS Committee. It is important to continue to maintain the momentum and to go on to greater achievements in the future.

Ramana Alladi
Chair, SAS Committee