

Newsletter - June 2007

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am pleased to welcome two new members to Council, Mr Paul Mason representing the new Commissioner for Children Tasmania and Associate Professor Bipin Gupta replacing outgoing Professor Michael Humphrey as University of Tasmania on this committee. Both these members met with other members at our last meeting held in May where there was inspired and lively discussion regarding the highlighted issues. The amalgamated 2005/2006 Annual Report continues to be progressed. It has been advised however that 2006 data cannot be released until November 2007 until completed entry has been achieved and as such will not be available for review by Council until this time. In view of this delay, it was agreed at the last meeting of Council that relevant trends occurring in 2005 and subsequent recommendations proposed by the various Committees of Council (including the Paediatric, Perinatal and Maternal) will be reported in future newsletters to assist in highlighting important issues in a timely manner. It was also noted that it would be worthwhile to provide a link to the DHHS intranet site which provides access to the latest *RHH Clinical Practice guidelines and protocols*. This intranet link address is: <http://intra.dhhs.tas.gov.au/dhhs-online/page.php?id=16956>.



Dr Simon Parsons
Chairperson
Council of Obstetric & Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity

COUNCIL NEWS

Current membership in accordance with the Terms of Reference includes Dr Simon Parsons (Chair); Mr Nick Goddard; Professor Allan Carmichael; Dr James Brodribb; Dr Geoff Shannon; Ms Ros Escott; Dr Peter Dargaville; Mr Peter Askey-Doran, Associate Professor Bipin Gupta, & Mr Paul Mason (new Commissioner for Children).

The Council website continues to archive newsletters, Annual Reports and various other relevant resource information. The website address is: <http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/agency/partnerships/comm.php> Please note that *RHH Clinical Practice Guidelines and Protocols* can be accessed from the intranet link included in Council's website.

CLINICAL MATTERS

1. **Child Death Review Committee**- the newly appointed Commissioner for Children is currently redrafting the original proposal for the establishment of this Committee (under the auspices of the Office for the Commissioner for Children) with a view to include *all* children and not just children known to Child Protection Services for review and a change to the Coroner's Act to



incorporate expertise of the medical profession. The new Commissioner has particular interest in centralising the process of review and drawing upon the current support and resources of the Office for Commissioner for Children, Coroner's Office and the Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity Committee of the *Council of the Obstetric & Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity* to assist the process of review. This Committee will primarily serve as a "check-point" for highlighting the effectiveness and current working status of the Child Protection system. This is particularly important in view of the consistent number of cases associated with Child Protection Services reported each year (note: approximately 5 paediatric death cases reported annually in Tasmania).

2. **Establishment of Paediatric M&M Committees at the 3 teaching hospitals-** It has been highlighted that these Committees are currently being set up within each hospital where statutory immunity of relevant members on committees will be implemented. Once established, the Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity Committee will seek Annual Reports from respective Committees to assist in the review and classification of Paediatric Deaths within Tasmania.
3. **Definitions of Maternal Deaths (Direct, Indirect, non-Maternal (Incidental))—** the relevant definitions have been derived from *Williams Obstetrics- 20th edition by Cunningham MacDonald Gant Leveno Gilstrap Hankins Clark: Copyright 1997* in view of its wide acceptance and subsequently included in future Annual Reports for convenience. The various definitions regarding maternal death in Tasmania are as follows:

Direct Maternal: This includes death of the mother resulting from obstetrical complications of pregnancy, labour, or the puerperium, and from interventions, omissions, incorrect treatment, or a chain of events resulting from any of these factors. An example is maternal death from exsanguination resulting from rupture of the uterus.

Indirect Maternal: This includes a maternal death not directly due to obstetrical causes, but resulting from previously existing disease, or a disease that developed during pregnancy, labour, or the puerperium, but which was aggravated by maternal physiological adaptation to pregnancy. An example is maternal death from complications of mitral stenosis.

Non Maternal (Incidental): Death of the mother resulting from accidental or incidental causes in no way related to the pregnancy may be classified as a non maternal death. An example is death from an automobile accident.

4. **Home Male Circumcision-** The extent and appropriateness of this practice is currently being investigated within Tasmania. The Council has agreed in principle that this procedure should only be undertaken (if medically required) within a safe hospital environment supported by surgical specialists including anaesthetists. The Office for the Commissioner for Children will provide Council with an update on current legislation in Tasmania.



SUBCOMMITTEES

PAEDIATRIC Mortality & Morbidity

This subcommittee continues to meet regularly on the 3rd Thursday of every second month (unless otherwise specified). Paediatric Death cases reported in 2005 and 2006 have been reviewed and classified by the Committee.

PERINATAL Mortality & Morbidity

Review and classification of perinatal deaths (including stillbirths and neonatal deaths) for 2005 and 2006 is currently being progressed. Additional information is currently being sought from the relevant hospitals to assist in final classification of some cases. Perinatal death cases for these years have been entered into a new excel format for easier review and classification by Committee members Drs Parsons and Brodribb. Information relating to *location of births and deaths* as well as *antenatal care provider* has been collected and incorporated into the review of cases.

MATERNAL Mortality & Morbidity

Associate Professor Bipin Gupta has agreed to Chair this Committee replacing his predecessor Professor Michael Humphrey. As outlined previously, the maternal death case reported in north-west Tasmania in 2006 has already been reviewed by this committee and a summary and recommendations from this case has been submitted for inclusion in the next amalgamated Annual Report.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Council will be writing to the Health Minister to recommend that the Vice Chancellor be contacted to confirm the University of Tasmania's preferred representative on Council. It is hoped that Associate Professor Bipin Gupta will be accepted as its new representative on Council following the resignation of Professor Michael Humphrey.

Associate Professor Bipin Gupta has experienced nearly 28 years of clinical, teaching and research as a Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology spanning across various continents of the world. Prior to moving to Australia, Associate Professor Gupta held senior academic appointments in Medical Universities and Institutions in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, India, Nepal, different parts of Africa and the West Indies. He has worked as a Senior Staff Specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at the Tamworth Base Hospital in Tamworth NSW before recently moving to Hobart. Associate Professor Gupta had also held a conjoint Associate Professor appointment in the discipline of Reproductive Medicine at the University of Newcastle. Associate Professor Gupta is a generalist with a passion for learning, teaching and imparting clinical training in basic Obstetrics and Gynaecology. His current interest is in the area of distance flexible medical education and Teaching Online.



Mr Paul Mason has been appointed as the new Commissioner for Children. Mr Mason has a background in family law as a solicitor and barrister with 27 years of experience across three states, including being a children's representative in over 200 mediation cases and acting as an independent children's lawyer in the Family Court. Mr Mason brings a strong commitment to achieving optimal outcomes for children, through negotiation and mediation skills to his position as Tasmania's Commissioner for Children.

MEETINGS FOR 2007

Next Council Meetings:

- Thursday 23 August, 12.30-2.00pm, DSU Meeting Room
- Thursday 22 November, 12.30-2.00pm, DSU Meeting Room

Next Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity Subcommittee Meetings:

- Thursday 19 July, 1.00-2.00pm, Forensic Pathology, Level 4 H Block, RHH
- Thursday 20 September, 1.00-2.00pm, Forensic Pathology, Level 4, RHH
- Thursday 15 November, 1.00-2.00pm, Forensic Pathology, Level 4, RHH

Note: All other subcommittee meetings will be advised.

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