

The First National Undergraduate Conference for Clinical Anatomy (NUCCA)

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A clinician must have a satisfactory understanding of anatomy in order to safely practice at a competent and effective level. In recent years, there is a current perception of declining emphasis being put on undergraduate anatomy teaching amongst universities in the UK. To address this perception, the first National Undergraduate Conference for Clinical Anatomy (NUCCA) was held in London 2013.





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Tendinous Interconnection between Flexor
Tendons in the Musician's Hand

The First National Undergraduate
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Medical Students Perspective

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Applications

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Management of Paediatric Trauma in
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Report

Synchronous Colorectal Cancers: A Case
Report and Review of Literature.

Introduction

The World Journal of Medical Education and Research (WJMER) (ISSN 2052-1715) is an online publication of the Doctors Academy Group of Educational Establishments. Published on a quarterly basis, the aim of the journal is to promote academia and research amongst members of the multi-disciplinary healthcare team including doctors, dentists, scientists, and students of these specialties from around the world. The principal objective of this journal is to encourage the aforementioned, from developing countries in particular, to publish their work. The journal intends to promote the healthy transfer of knowledge, opinions and expertise between those who have the benefit of cutting edge technology and those who need to innovate within their resource constraints. It is our hope that this will help to develop medical knowledge and to provide optimal clinical care in different settings. We envisage an incessant stream of information flowing along the channels that WJMER will create and that a surfeit of ideas will be gleaned from this process. We look forward to sharing these experiences with our readers in our editions. We are honoured to welcome you to WJMER.

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The First National Undergraduate Conference for Clinical Anatomy (NUCCA)

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Abstract

A clinician must have a satisfactory understanding of anatomy in order to safely practice at a competent and effective level. In recent years, there is a current perception of declining emphasis being put on undergraduate anatomy teaching amongst universities in the UK. To address this perception, the first National Undergraduate Conference for Clinical Anatomy (NUCCA) was held in London 2013.

Key Words

NUCCA, Undergraduate Conference, Clinical Anatomy, Barts Anatomical Society

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Introduction

The majority of anatomy teaching required for satisfactory clinical practice is taught during medical school training. However, with novel teaching methods such as problem-based learning (PBL) replacing the number of lectures and the use of dissection in anatomy education¹, there is a current perception of declining emphasis being put on anatomy at the undergraduate level². This is especially becoming a concern with anatomy being examined much more thoroughly in postgraduate exams such as the intercollegiate membership exams³. There is a concern among clinicians that there is a discrepancy amongst the anatomical knowledge of recent graduates, with variable knowledge depending upon the medical school of graduation. Furthermore, we identified a significant lack of platforms available for medical students to present their research relating to clinical, surgical or radiological anatomy. Thus, in the hope of raising attention and enthusiasm on clinical anatomy in undergraduate medical students, the first national undergraduate anatomy conference was organised. The purpose of the conference was to highlight the relevance of anatomy in clinical practice and research, and its significance throughout training. The committee also hoped to broaden the student perception of anatomy, which is often confined to a very basic understanding, taught in the first two years of medical school, often by non-clinicians^[3].

Overview of NUCCA

On Saturday 28th September 2013, The National Undergraduate Conference for Clinical Anatomy (NUCCA) was held, for the first time, at the Robin Brook Centre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, the oldest hospital in Europe. The conference was organized by Barts and The London Student Anatomical Society, in association with Doctor's Academy, an international consortium of Doctors, Dentists and Scientists. The conference consisted of delegates from eighteen medical schools around the United Kingdom alongside renowned clinical anatomists and surgeons. The day consisted of three keynote lectures, student poster presentations and an afternoon of workshops.

Keynote Lectures

Following a brief welcome from Barts and The London Anatomical Society, **Dr. Catherine Molyneux**, Director of Anatomical Studies at Barts and The London and the Patron for NUCCA 2013, welcomed delegates and gave an enticing overview of Clinical Anatomy and the evolution of anatomy teaching throughout the ages.

Our morning was graced with a series of engaging keynote speakers. The first was **Mr. Robert Whitaker**, a retired paediatric urological surgeon, and is the renowned author of Instant Anatomy book and website www.instantanatomy.net. During

his talk entitled “Anatomical Illustration”, Mr. Whitaker shared with us his long experience of teaching anatomy and illustration, and provided students with invaluable advice on how to improve illustration skills (as is useful in documenting details of procedures performed in clinical practice).

The second keynote lecture was by none other than **Professor Harold Ellis**, Emeritus Professor of Anatomy and Surgery at the University of London. In his much anticipated lecture, entitled “A lifetime of learning, using and teaching anatomy”, Prof. Ellis described how anatomy has maintained its relevance

to surgical practice as disease evolves and newer procedures are introduced into clinical practice. He, therefore, emphasized the significance of having strong links between the operating theatre and the dissecting room.

The final keynote speech was by **Professor Vishy Mahadevan**, Professor of Surgical Anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons of England, who is more famous as the Funky Anatomy Professor. Prof. Mahadevan gave delegates an insight into the evolution of surgical practice with his lecture entitled “From Barber Surgeons to Robots”. His



Figure 1: left - Prof. Harold Ellis; middle – Mr. Robert Whitaker; right – Prof. Vishy Mahadevan



Figure 2: Afternoon anatomy workshops

unique and flamboyant teaching style captured the audience's attention and the importance of appreciating the works of early anatomists such as Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564).

Workshops

The delegates were divided into three groups in the afternoon and rotated through the three workshops. The first workshop was **"Anatomy as Applied to Trauma and Emergency Medicine"**, run by faculty from Doctor's Academy. The other two workshops: **"Pathologies of the Thorax"** and **"Applied Anatomy of the Head and Neck"** were run by our guest speakers Prof. Harold Ellis and Prof. Vishy Mahadevan, respectively. These interactive workshops engaged with students through their existing knowledge and also included relevant surface anatomy. The delegates received an opportunity to learn selected components of clinical anatomy from experts in the field, unusual to that of the traditional lecture or dissection-based learning.

Poster Competition

A poster competition on the theme of clinically orientated dissection or projects related to medicine, surgery or radiology was also held during the conference. Prior to the conference, submitted abstracts by students from across the UK were reviewed by an expert panel, and the best twenty-two were invited to present their poster at NUCCA. Guest speakers were impressed with the

high quality of all the presentations, and upon much discussion, winners of the poster competition winners was decided.

- 1st Place: **Amy Campbell** from University of Glasgow for her poster presentation entitled, **'Neurovasculature of High and Low Tie Ligation of the Inferior Mesenteric Artery'**
- 2nd Place: **Nikita Joji** from University of Birmingham for her poster presentation entitled, **'Anterolateral Leg: A Single Cadaveric Study on Duplicate Veins & Variant Nerves'**
- 3rd Place: **Meerwais Tokhi** from University of Leeds for his poster presentation entitled, **'Carotid Artery Geometry and Stroke'**

Prof. Vishy Mahadevan presented the winners with their certificates and prizes.

Feedback

The conference had a total of 75 delegates from over eighteen UK medical schools, 59% were in clinical years of study, 9% doing an intercalated Bachelors of Science degree (BSc) and 32% in preclinical studies. Many of the attending delegates had or were undertaking a BSc in anatomy-related subjects. During the conference, delegates were asked to complete a questionnaire exploring students' motivation to attend such conferences and



Figure 3: Poster competition

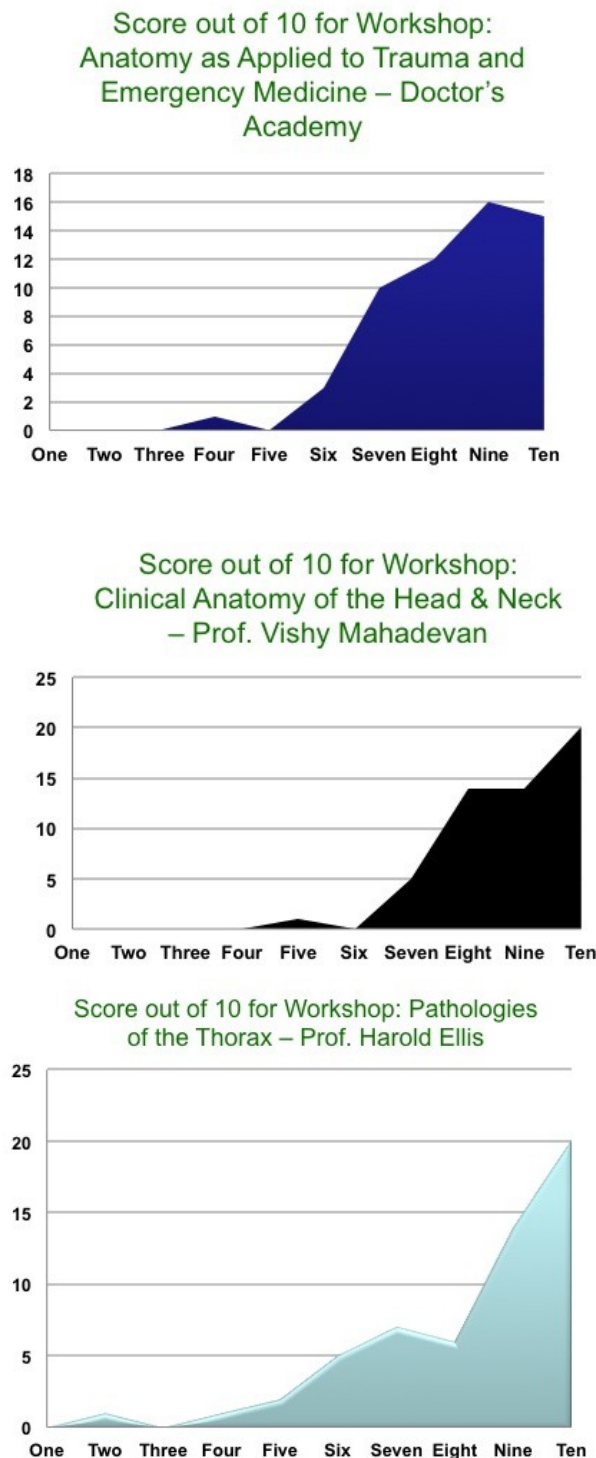


Figure 4: breakdown of satisfaction score for afternoon workshops

feedback on whether NUCCA added to their existing knowledge or changed the delegate's perception of anatomy in clinical medicine. The feedback for NUCCA was overwhelmingly positive with over 70% of delegates giving an overall experience score of 8/10. Delegates were asked how much the conference added to their existing knowledge, upon which 60% gave a rating of 6/10 or above. All the keynote lectures were received with great enthusiasm and 80% of delegates rated the keynote lectures above 8/10 on a mean rating scale score. Furthermore, more than 75% of delegates rated the workshops above 7/10 (Figure 4), indicating that the majority of students were extremely satisfied, especially since 60% also added positive comments reflecting upon the valuable knowledge they had gained. Having received such positive feedback and commendation from the host medical school, NUCCA has started its preparations for the 2014 conference. A new committee is currently being formed with the previous committee acting as senior advisors. Further to the existing components of the conference, we hope to introduce prosection-based teaching and anatomy illustration workshops.

Acknowledgements

The NUCCA committee would like to thank Dr. Catherine Molyneux for her support in organizing NUCCA 2013 and all of the sponsors who made the running of the conference possible. We would also like to thank Doctor's Academy for their invaluable support as well as InstantAnatomy.net and FunkyProfessor.com for assisting with the poster competition prizes.

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