



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As July fast approaches. We are all geared up for an exciting and thought provoking ASM in Melbourne. Taking the theme of Victorian attitudes to all things social and sexual, we have assembled an outstanding Faculty of Speakers. Many of our presenters are global leaders in their fields, holding senior positions on international committees, and fully support the concept that gold standard obstetric and gynaecological care cannot be separated from the psychosocial aspects of the women's lives.

Topics include the expanding age span of reproductive care, a session focusing on young people and, of course, some up to the minute core clinical care updates.

As an organisation, ASPOG has always been sensitive to the needs, not only of our own patients, but of the needs of the wider community, and we are delighted to welcome a session on global women's healthcare and rights.

Most importantly we have an excellent number of abstracts submitted by new researchers.... the future of this organisation! Please don't forget to send in your registration forms for this exciting meeting www.aspog.org.au for programme and registration details. Early Bird before July 3rd.

There is also a move to include our neighbours across the water into ASPOG. New Zealand does not have a Society for Psychosocial Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and you will have an opportunity to make your views known at the AGM, to be held during the ASM on July 31st.

Looking forward to welcoming you to Victoria.

Susan Carr

PELVIC PAIN FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA

The Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia, ABN 98 168 910 316, is a not-for-profit body formed to promote education and research in the area of pelvic pain.

The Pelvic Pain Foundation has arisen out of a need first recognized at the *National Pain Summit* held at Parliament House, Canberra in 2010. The Pain Summit recognized that chronic pain is a major health issue for Australia and developed Australia's first *National Pain Strategy*. This strategy is being implemented throughout Australia by *PainAustralia* in collaboration with both state and federal governments.

While the National Pain Strategy addresses chronic pain generally, it was recognized in 2010 that the special needs of those with pelvic pain had not been specifically addressed.

In 2011, the Pelvic Pain Steering Committee in collaboration with PainAustralia and the Faculty of Pain Medicine looked at ways of remedying this problem. Their report entitled *'The \$6Billion Woman and the \$600 Million Girl: The Pelvic Pain Report'* consulted widely with health professionals and those affected by pelvic pain to outline the problems with current pelvic pain services and policies. It made recommendations on how these problems could be overcome.

Since then, the extent of pelvic pain in men has also been recognized.

The Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia has taken up the challenge of implementing these recommendations and representing the interests of those with pelvic pain regardless of age or gender.

Pelvic Pain Association Launch in Adelaide

On Tuesday 24th February, The Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia was launched at SAMRI in Adelaide. The event was opened by David Butler, Director of the Neuro-orthopaedic Institute.

Dr Susan Evans spoke about the need for greater awareness, education, research and advocacy about pelvic pain and Ms Tiffany Brooks gave a moving first-hand account of her experience of living with pelvic pain. Professor Mark Hutchinson, the Director

of the Centre for Nanoscale Biophotonics, spoke about the interdisciplinary research partnerships that will change the way we treat pain in the future.

SHine SA is partnering with The Pelvic Pain Foundation to run a series of educational events for both doctors and nurses - August 7th/8th and November 16th. (JHS: It looks a fantastic programme-check it out [here](#)) Please also have a look at the Foundation's website - there are resources and information for health professionals and patients. www.pelvicpain.org.au

Pelvic Pain Association Launch in Melbourne

On Tuesday 24th March, Annette and Graham Smorgon generously hosted the Melbourne Launch of PPFA. A widely diverse group attended, all motivated by the desire to see progress in the area of pelvic pain. Often it was an opportunity to meet that person they'd heard of or written to, for the first time.

Professor of Neuroscience, Lorimer Moseley was our all-round masterful MC particularly resplendent in jacket and jeans following a red wine incident on his flight, and Eugenie Lee displayed the art that so beautifully and honestly reflects the distress and loneliness of pelvic pain.

Tiffany Brooks spoke on her own difficult journey negotiating pelvic pain through a variety of health services – and Shan Morrison spoke of her experience caring for men with pelvic pain.

A glass or two of champagne was consumed along the way...all for a good cause! The Foundation goes from strength to strength, with a strong future ahead.



Dr Susan Evans, Ms Jill Davidson, CEO SHine SA, Dr Tonia Mezzini, Director of Medical Services SHine SA

BOOK REVIEWS

Pelvic Pain - Self Help

When Sex Hurts.

Authors: **Andrew Goldstein**, MD FACOG, **Caroline Pukall**, PhD, Irwin Goldstein, MD
(*Andrew is Past President of the International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health*)

Publishers: Da Capo Press 2011
ISBN: 978-0-7382-1398-9

Easy to read. Covers all diagnostic categories, with medical therapies. Chapters on CBT and physiotherapy. Nothing conflicting with medical practise. Certainly would be an empowering easy read for the often frustrated sufferer. I must admit when the authors started talking about generalised vulvodynia as a neuropathic pain and a form of complex regional pain syndrome – I was sold!! I also learnt a few things such as topical testosterone and topical gabapentin for provoked vestibulodynia. I think I need to look up their references in the excellent bibliography!

Heal Pelvic Pain.

Author: **Amy Stein**
(*Amy is a physical therapist / physiotherapist*)

Publishers McGraw Hill 2009
ISBN 978-0-07-154656-0

As Andrew Goldstein wrote in the prologue to this book, traditional gynaecological training generally omits to mention the incredibly important role myofascial disorders play in the generation of female sexual pain disorders. Thankfully Amy and others in Australia are redressing that omission. By heeding their advice chronic conditions are becoming more manageable.

This is a book for the motivated, astute and disciplined sufferer. It contains clear descriptions and illustrations of muscle exercises to overcome these poorly functioning areas. Internal and external pelvic and abdominal wall massage for painful trigger points is clearly demonstrated.

Just incase I was barking up the wrong tree (not being a physiotherapist and therefore really not eligible to comment on all the descriptive exercises) I asked Shan Morrison, Director of Women's and Men's Health Physiotherapy in Melbourne, if she knew of the book and what she thought of it. She knew it AND recommended it for their clients. Phew- barking up the right tree!

And while we are on the subject of pelvic pain- let us not forget our men folk...

Ending Male Pelvic Pain

Author: **Isa Herrera**
Publishers: Duplex Publishing 2013
ISBN 14922004420

This is described as "the ultimate self –help guide for men suffering with prostatitis, recovering from prostatectomy, or living with pelvic or sexual pain" (pelvic or sexual pain – not just a female complaint).

280 pages of easy to read text on exercises, with illustrations, anatomical drawings and 6 pages of bibliography. Again for the astute, motivated and disciplined person.

I only wish her model had less of a six pack- whoops what does that say about me!!

Jackie Stacy

ASPOG MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

I am very grateful to Alistair MacLennan for forwarding this information for the newsletter.

The following is from Media Release
The University of Adelaide
www.adelaide.edu.au/news

Genetic causes of cerebral palsy trump birth causes

Tuesday, 2 June 2015

University of Adelaide researchers have discovered cerebral palsy has an even stronger genetic cause than previously thought, leading them to call for an end to unnecessary caesareans and arbitrary litigation against obstetric staff.

In an authoritative review published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, members of the Australian Cerebral Palsy Research Group, based at the University of Adelaide's Robinson Research Institute, argue that up to 45% of cerebral palsy cases can have genetic causes.

This builds on research published in February this year by the group which found at least 14% of cerebral palsy cases are likely to be caused by a genetic mutation. And the group expects the percentage of genetically caused cerebral palsy cases will continue to increase as genetic sequencing techniques evolve.

The University of Adelaide's Emeritus Professor Alastair MacLennan, leader of the research group, says the realisation by courts that many cases of cerebral palsy cannot be prevented by differences in labour management should reduce the adverse influence of obstetric litigation.

"For many years it was assumed, without good evidence, cerebral palsy was caused by brain damage at birth through lack of oxygen. This belief along with the temptation to blame the insured, and the high cost of caring for children with cerebral palsy, has fuelled litigation against obstetric staff," says Emeritus Professor MacLennan.

"Numerous recent studies have shown that despite an increase in caesarean deliveries over 50 years, which have risen from 5% to 34% in Australia, there has been no overall change in cerebral palsy rates.

"Some of the increase in caesareans appears to be due to defensive obstetrics and fear of litigation – there are lower rates of caesareans in countries with a "no-fault insurance scheme" like New Zealand, where rates are 23%.

"It's estimated that \$300 million is paid on cerebral palsy settlements in Australia each year. I hope that our research will help end unfounded cerebral palsy related litigation," he says.

Several more years of research are needed but the research group believes that eventually cerebral palsy genetic testing before, during and after pregnancy will be introduced.

"It is now becoming apparent that cerebral palsy is an umbrella diagnosis for children with non-progressive disorders of movement control and posture, and that there are many types and antenatal influences including genetic causes," says the University of Adelaide's Professor Jozef Gecz, Head of Neurogenetic Research, Robinson Research Institute.

"Cerebral is akin to many other neurodevelopmental disorders such as intellectual disability, autism and epilepsy, co-morbidities that are often seen with cerebral palsy, and they too have many genetic causes," he says.

"Many children who have received a diagnosis of cerebral palsy may have an inherited or spontaneous genetic cause and this is exciting because we can now focus research on the beginning of pregnancy and not so fruitfully on the circumstances of birth," says Dr Suzanna Thompson, co-author on the paper and paediatric neurologist at the Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide.

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More can be read from Alistair's article accepted by the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

The reference is currently
MacLennan AH, Thompson SC, Gecz J, Cerebral Palsy- Causes, pathways, and the role of genetic variants, American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (2015),doi:10.1016/j.ajog.2015.05.034

DAMAGING SELFIES

The newspaper, The Australian May 30/31 2015, ran an article on their front page titled: *Click bait: kids at risk as sexualised behaviour becomes "new normal"* This was about a 13 year old girl posting a selfie of her abdomen displaying the graphic "boner garage" with a unidirectional arrow pointing to where this garage was. We are being warned that we are moving into an era of self perpetuated on line pornography and that our teens are growing up accepting this as the norm as far as sexual behaviour is concerned.

RURAL CONNECTIONS

I was driving along the Newcastle Expressway on Wednesday April 15th with a full load of Gumnuts and Scratch Mix (fodder for the horses and chucks!)- a 3 monthly pastime when you live on a rural property I've discovered - when suddenly our own Professor Jane Fisher was sharing the moment with me on the radio talking about post-natal mood disturbances.

Unfortunately the merriment of the moment took away my concentration and I forgot the actual content of her conversation with the interviewer (sorry Jane!) She did however make reference to the Jean Hailes website www.jeanhailes.org.au

To quote: "young women are seeking treatment from family doctors and gynaecologists for physical injuries from rough sex. I've had GPs tell me about the injuries they are seeing in young girls when they have been forced to do what is in porn videos. They are not watching anything within a circle of normality." The concern is that this usage of social media is endangering children's physical and mental health.

Can one hope and pray that this is affecting a minority or is that just being naïve knowing the influence of peer pressure and the fact that mobile phones are rife?

Jackie Stacy

MORE BOOK REVIEWS

from Tonia - of a different kind

While browsing in bookstores, I always keep an eye out for fiction with a medical bent. Here a few of my most recent finds...

The Daughters of Mars

Author: **Tom Keneally**

This novel tells the story of two sisters, Naomi and Sally Durance who leave the family farm to join the army in 1915. Tom Keneally's writing is elegant and engaging and there are a number of passages that demand a re-read just to savor the prose. As well as being a well-researched account of the challenges facing army doctors and nurses in the Dardanelles and the Western Front, the novel draws you into the intimate lives of the characters. My top recommendation for 2014.

Dare I make a confession - I have never visited it until today (thanks to my rural prompting) What a great website. So much educational material for the public AND health professionals.

I clicked on "oestrogens and mood" - how proud I was to find the up loaded slide presentation was from the 2012 ASPOG conference.

I think we all need to set aside a weekly educational afternoon to avail ourselves of the hard work that others have provided in the form of wonderful professional educational content of material on the web (AND not feel guilty about the time spent-infact time very well spent!)

Jackie Stacy

Internal Medicine: A Doctor's Stories

Author: **Terence Holt**

Terence Holt wrote these nine short stories as an attempt to 'make sense of the process of becoming a doctor'. Written over a period of ten years, beginning just after the author's residency ended. Moving and thoughtful, this is a book for new doctors and those of us who continue to marvel at the extraordinary privilege that a life in medicine affords us.

The Birth of the Pill: How Four Crusaders Reinvented Sex and Launched a Revolution

Author: **Jonathan Eig**

Jonathan Eig is a former journalist whose account of the development of 'the pill' reads like a 'who done it thriller' but with social, cultural and scientific history thrown into the mix. Some great photos in the middle section. Thank you Enovid for spring-boarding the sexual revolution.

Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers

Author: **Mary Roach**

Much giggling whilst reading this on a long haul flight. This account of what has happened to cadavers over history is "oddly compelling, often hilarious", but "never disrespectful". Not so good for just before you go to sleep however....I had some very odd dreams! Mary Roach as also written another book that I'm keen to track down called Bonk: the Curious Coupling of Science and Sex. I'll let you know how that goes! I'm assuming the dreams will be better.

Tonia Mezzini

WOMEN'S STUDIES INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Volume 51, July–August 2015, Pages 56–65

Do contemporary social and health discourses arouse peripartum anxiety? A qualitative investigation of women's accounts

Authors: **Heather J. Rowe**
Jane R.W. Fisher

More information is available <http://authors.elsevier.com/a/1RAbt-6kqC~WU>

ASPOG

41st Annual Scientific Meeting

Friday 31st July & Saturday 1st August

2015

Royal Women's Hospital, Conference Centre, Melbourne



*Women's Health, Sex and Society.....
Are We Really Victorian?*



Australian Society for
Psychosocial Obstetrics
& Gynaecology

www.aspog.org.au