

## **SAMSoc Pre-BSAVA 2019 Spring Meeting Review**

*The following article was written by SAMSoc Board member Caroline Kisielewicz – speakers' notes are available to SAMSoc members by contacting Liz Welch at [secretary@samsoc.org](mailto:secretary@samsoc.org).*

The pre-BSAVA spring meeting of the Small Animal Medicine Society (SAMSoc) took place at the ICC, Birmingham, on Wednesday 3 April 2019. This annual event provides an environment for specialists, residents, interns, advanced practitioners and all veterinarians with an interest in internal medicine to network with like-minded individuals and hear about a wide range of topics spanning the field.

The day started with a presentation by James Swann. James recently co-chaired the panel that developed the 2018 ACVIM consensus statement for treatment of dogs with IMHA. James discussed the panel's recommendations and the measures taken to reach a collective viewpoint. Glucocorticoids remain the mainstay of treatment although it was interesting to note, that a wide range of initial doses are commonly used. James referenced some preliminary research suggesting that side effects from glucocorticoids may be more pronounced in dogs receiving a divided dose of prednisolone compared to those receiving a single daily dose. Conversely, the serum bilirubin seemed to improve more rapidly with a divided dose protocol. James explained that the use of other immunosuppressive drugs in addition to glucocorticoids remains controversial. The available evidence is still not sufficiently robust to allow firm recommendations as to the optimal second agent. James highlighted the need for good quality research studies ideally taking into consideration individual and breed variation which may allow immunosuppressive treatment to be tailored to each patient in the future.

Dr. Adrian Shields, a doctor who specialises in the treatment of immune-mediated disease in patients with immune deficiencies provided an insight into therapeutic, immunosuppressive strategies used in human medicine. As well as drugs that were familiar to a veterinary audience, Adrian also described other drug therapies which have not (as yet) been explored in the veterinary field. These included anti-tumour necrosis factor alpha therapies, monoclonal antibody targeting specific cytokines, highly specific B cell depletion agents and Janus associated kinase inhibitors. It was fascinating to be made aware of the wide range of immunosuppressive agents available. Hopefully, these agents will be considered for research studies to improve the armoury available for managing immune-mediated diseases in animals.

Andy Kent chaired a panel discussion with James Swann, Professor Alex German and Mayank Seth regarding the clinical use of immunosuppressants. They each brought their clinical experience from university and practice environments and highlighted some areas of agreement (lower starting doses in large breed dogs) as well as some divergent opinions. The audience were able to vote on polls and pose their own questions via an app providing an additional dimension to the proceedings. Many tips for choosing and using immunosuppressive agents were provided however it was clear that there was no absolute consensus and even experienced specialists struggle to agree on some aspects. The panel session could easily have continued for the rest of the day given the enthusiasm for this

subject area. There is clearly a lot that remains unknown in this field again reflecting the need for further research in this area.



## A PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE CLINICAL USE OF IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS

SAMsoc Spring Meeting 2019

Professor Alex German provided an entertaining lecture on obesity in dogs and cats. He critically evaluated the dietary components that contribute to obesity in humans and animals and showed, through the use of hypothesis falsification, the classic flaws in many studies from both human and veterinary fields that try to implicate specific macronutrients as sole cause. By examining human obesity trends from the last 4-5 decades, it has been determined that neither excesses of carbohydrates nor fats alone are responsible for the increasing obesity crisis. Studies have shown that cats prefer foods high in protein and dogs prefer foods high in fat and protein. Ultimately, Alex demonstrated that calorie control is more important in preventing or in managing obesity rather than the total fat or carbohydrate content of a diet.

This fittingly led to the hot buffet lunch break. A great variety of food, including 4 different desserts was provided, and this allowed time for old friends to catch up and new connections to be made. During the post-lunch AGM, thanks were given to Isuru Gajanayake who has retired from his position as treasurer. Isuru has been a key member of the SAMSoc committee for 6 years - his enthusiasm and efficiency will be sorely missed. Natasha Borgeat will be taking on this role. Andy Kent will develop SAMSoc's presence on a number of communicative platforms. Chris Scudder and Caroline Kisielewicz were elected to the committee to help with organising the autumn and spring meetings, respectively. Hills have announced that they will kindly be sponsoring the next meeting (with a focus on advanced in management of gastrointestinal disease) in October 2019.

The SAMSoc case report competition included two excellent presentations from Jess Bacon and Dan Thompson. Jess described a cat with clinical *Mycobacterium* attributed to consumption of venison-based raw food while Dan's case related to a cat with *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* (identified in liver nodules) likely secondary to contact with rodents.

JD Foster, from the Friendship Hospital for Animals in Washington DC, who has extensive experience and has widely published in the area of kidney disease in small animals, gave a detailed presentation on the advanced management of acute kidney injury (AKI). JD

explained that renal injury may be present even in cases of normal glomerular filtration rate (e.g. ureteral obstruction). This can complicate the identification of AKI particularly given that renal pelvis dilation can be minimal, and the dilation of the obstructed ureter can take days to develop. He cautioned the audience against excessive administration of fluids to AKI patients as this can lead to higher mortality rates. Additional supportive treatments were discussed including novel and specialised options such as stem cell therapy and renal replacement therapy.

David Singleton, who has recently completed his PhD analysing data from the Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network (SAVSNET) delivered a presentation looking at antibiotic prescription and resistance surveillance in the UK. Antimicrobial resistance is a leading global health issue. While there are encouraging trends suggesting reduced rates of antibiotic prescriptions over the last few years, it is clear that there remains more work to be done to tackle this critical issue. SAMSoc has been keenly involved in antibiotic stewardship initiatives through PROTECT and PROTECT ME and this is key area of interest for the society. David reported that SAVSNET has developed a benchmarking platform for antimicrobial prescription to allow individual practices to compare their level of prescription with other practices. Studies are ongoing to determine the impact of benchmarking on prescribing behaviour.

The day was concluded with a lecture provided by Professor David Church. Building on his years of experience, Professor Church presented several key tips for diagnosing and managing challenging endocrine cases. He described how to approach the diagnosis of hyperadrenocorticism in dogs through cost effective means looking at sensitivity, specificity, negative and positive predictive values of the various tests available. The use (and appropriate dose) of prednisolone in cases of hypoadrenocorticism was discussed including a plea to recognise and avoid potential chronic supraphysiologic dosing. Professor Church highlighted the leukogram as a useful aid in determining whether excessive prednisolone has been administered.

Thanks to Andy Kent, Emma Roberts, Fergus Allerton and the rest of the committee for organising such a great day. And thank you to our sponsors for the day, Elanco and Hill's. We very much look forward to the autumn SAMSoc meeting on Friday 25 October 2019 in Warwick. Any interested readers are encouraged to visit [www.samsoc.org](http://www.samsoc.org) for further information about the society. We would love to see more people joining, participating in clinical research projects and attending the meetings.



*Case report competition winner Dan Thompson with sponsor Mark O'Byrne of Hill's*