

The 1,341st Meeting of the Brighton and Sussex Medico-Chirurgical Society took place on 4th February, 2016 in the Audrey Emerton Building:

Dr. Timothy Chevassut, Senior Lecturer in Haematology at BSMS and Honorary Consultant RSCH was the guest speaker.

Dr. Chevassut began his talk with highlights of his medical career starting with the interview process that led to him joining the medical school at Oxford. His house jobs were in Bristol. This was followed by a 'career break', which was a research stint in Boston/USA affiliated with the Harvard School of Public Health/Medical School. The culmination of his research activity was the award of a PhD from Edinburgh University.

Dr. Chevassut recount of the history of blood started with William Harvey's (1628) discovery of the blood circulation. It was, however not until 1909 that Karl Landstein explored the transfusion concept and discovered blood groups for which he was awarded a Noble prize. The first blood bank was inaugurated in 1937 with a well-established transfusion service in 1949. Dr. Chevassut explored the concept of rhesus disease and how this disease has nearly disappeared in modern medicine. Unfortunately blood borne diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis and CJD have all tarnished the evolving history of blood. Hemophilia, which afflicted the Royal households of Europe, was highlighted as a classic disease with disastrous sequelae to transfusion treatment. Dr. Chevassut went on to present the evolution of anticoagulants (aspirin/400BC, warfarin/1948, Heparin/1916, dabigalvan family/2008).

Dr. Chevassut next focused on the developments in the cause and treatment of Leukaemia starting with the first case presentation by Dr. John Hughes Bennett/1845. Dr. Sydney Farber/1947 was mentioned as the 'father' of chemotherapy for his development of Aminoterin (methotrexate like drug) and Nowell and Hungerford for discovering the Philadelphia chromosome in 1960, which was a major step in the understanding of Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia. Targeted immunotherapy with monoclonal antibodies (Imatinab), was used by Dr. Brian Druker as far back as 1998. Dr. Chevassut is leading clinical trials targeting leukaemia. Targeted stem cell research is the future for diagnostics and targeted personalized treatment. The Anthony Nolan Trust founded in 1974 has been providing for over one thousand transplants/year with half a million, registered donors.

Dr. Chevassut ended the talk with his personal experience of the Beta thalassaemia trait. Dr. Alan Ireland gave a vote of thanks.