

## CONFERENCE REPORT

### XX FIGO World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics, Rome, Italy, 7–12 October 2012

Very little seems to have changed since I last attended an International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) conference over 20 years ago. At FIGO 2012 there were still many competing sessions; several posters were poorly presented, making one feel sorry for those who had spent many hours producing a document that was easy to read, understand and gave a take-home message. I did notice that the youngsters (as I was last time!) were no longer there – due to Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) rules perhaps? Who knows, but it is a shame if those who are actually conducting the day-to-day research cannot attend, since they are the future of the specialty and need to be encouraged.

I attended a lecture by Liam Donaldson not knowing quite what to expect. It was superb; an exploration of patient safety. There is 11.7% error in secondary care; that in primary care has not been established as yet. Liam looked at ways patient safety could be improved and at the defences doctors use to distance themselves from mistakes.

The symposium on 'Ulipristal Acetate: New SPRM [Selective Progesterone Receptor Modulator] Therapeutics for Uterine Fibroids' was packed! It was standing room only, possibly because this appeared to be the only really new innovation at the Congress. Esmya<sup>®</sup> is 5 mg ulipristal acetate used as a once-daily treatment to shrink fibroids before surgery. It also stops heavy menstrual bleeding and reduces fibroid size with no reported side effects.

In the field of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) we are used to concepts of progestogen receptor blockers/antagonists and their value in our clinical work; this group of compounds has the potential to prevent the luteinising hormone surge, induce amenorrhoea

and have no effect on estrogen levels. Their potential in SRH is enormous, and it is a sad reflection on the law and society that we cannot more widely promote the development of these agents for use in contraception and medical termination of pregnancy.

Reviewed by **Gillian Robinson**

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**Competing interests** Dr Robinson's travel and registration for the conference were covered by Gedeon Richter. The company had no input into this conference report. Dr Robinson has previously received payment from MSD for teaching nurses to fit contraceptive implants.

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