

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE ACADEMY ON 13/14 SEPTEMBER 2004

MODERNISING MEDICAL CAREERS

The Academy received a presentation from Professor Alan Crockard, on the current situation regarding Modernising Medical Careers.

It was proposed that in the future there should be a curriculum that is competency based with easily transferable skills and that doctors should move through a structured environment to enable them to acquire and demonstrate pre-defined standards of competency. The Foundation Year 1 programme will commence in 2005; Foundation year 2 in 2006 and specialty training will begin in 2007.

There was a proposal that a new post (or F3) be created at the end of the Foundation Course. These F3 posts would be broad-based service and orientation posts lasting one or two years and could be used for those who are unsure which specialty to choose or for those who could not immediately enter the new specialty training grades. It was not clear if these posts would have training approval.

Professor Crockard indicated that it would be helpful for Colleges and Faculties to define the characteristics they believed necessary for the doctors they would like to recruit into their specialty. It would also be helpful for Colleges to focus on selection and the end point of training.

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS WITH A SPECIALIST INTEREST

The Academy considered the above paper, which indicated that the Royal College of General Practitioners was concerned to ensure that all those providing a service of specialism within General Practice is of a standard that will be acceptable to patients and that practitioners should practice to a particular level of competence.

The clinical governance of doctors is the responsibility of the Primary Care Trusts but, since General Practitioners with a Specialist Interest are a new category, the PCTs are having difficulty knowing what standards may be required and leave this to the local consultants. This may result in variable standards, which would not be in the best interests of patients.

It is proposed that there should be national standards of competence, which should be agreed through co-operation between the RCGP and other Medical Royal Colleges and the Primary Care Societies, with input from the public. There should be links with revalidation and appraisal and professional development.

It was agreed that this issue should also be discussed with the Academy's Patient/Lay Group, the NHS Confederation and the Joint Consultants Committee.

The Academy supported this document in principle and agreed to send detailed comments to the RCGP for consideration. A final version would then be circulated for approval.

NATIONAL CLINICAL ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

The Academy considered a suggested draft Memorandum of Understanding with the NCAA. The Memorandum was endorsed in principle subject to one or two minor amendments.

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALISM AND PATIENT-CENTRED PROFESSIONALISM

Medical Professionalism

Professor Black reported that the Royal College of Physicians of London was setting up a working party on Medical Professionalism.

The Terms of Reference of the working party were: *To obtain and consider written and oral evidence on the attributes of professionalism; to obtain and consider written and oral evidence on professional values in medicine; to define medical professionalism in the 21st century and to consider ways in which it might be preserved, strengthened and promoted.*

The working party is expected to report between March/May 2005 and a dedicated website is to be set up.

Patient-Centred Professionalism

The Academy considered a paper on patient-centred professionalism from the Picker Institute Europe, whose purpose is the advancement of patient-centred care. Sir Donald Irvine, who is Chairman of the Trustees of PIE, is convening a 'partnership of the willing' which will bring together interested parties in order to share in this undertaking. Members of the Academy were actively considering the document, and ways in which they might be involved, and the matter would be discussed again at the October meeting.

ASSISTED DYING FOR THE TERMINALL ILL BILL

The Academy received the response, which had been produced to the above Bill by the Royal College of Physicians of London on behalf of the Academy. This response would be added to the Academy's website.

APPRAISAL OF DOCTORS IN THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR

The Academy considered a paper prepared by Dr Ash in respect of appraisal for doctors who work exclusively in the private sector suggesting that the Colleges and Faculties could establish a list of appraisers who would be prepared to undertake this task.

Dr Ash reported that the British Medical Association, in consultation with the Department of Health, the General Medical Council and the Independent Healthcare Forum, had produced documentation for appraisal for those working exclusively in the independent sector. This documentation is available on the BMA website, as well as the website of BUPA and the Independent Health Forum.

Dr Ash would draw up a Code of Practice for the Academy to consider at a future meeting.

MEETING WITH JOHN HUTTON

The Chairman reported that several members of the Academy would be meeting the Minister for Health, Mr John Hutton. The topics to be discussed would include information technology, Modernising Medical Careers and the new consultant contract and external duties.

CHEATING IN EXAMINATIONS

The Chairman reported that the Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health had been reviewing the quality assurance of their examinations, which included minimising cheating. A paper concerning cheating was being prepared for publication.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to share information on both quality assurance of examinations in general, appeals processes and preventing cheating. Professor Douglas agreed to lead on this initiative and would contact each College or Faculty for this information, which would be collated and considered at a future meeting of the Academy.

Defining the evidence for revalidation: supporting the Colleges

The Chairman referred to the above document, which the Modernisation Agency believed could be modified to make it suitable for specialties other than general practice.

The Academy believed that it would be helpful to produce a generic template, which would include areas such as good communication skills etc. to which specialty specific details could be added.

Professor Teasdale reported that there were a number of initiatives being undertaken and that it would be helpful if these could be drawn together into a compendium. He agreed to gather this information on behalf of the Academy.

THE HEALTHCARE COMMISSION

The Academy considered the *Concordat Implementation Programme – Next Steps*. Professor Underwood, who represents the Academy on the Implementation Working Group, indicated that the signatories to the Concordat (which included the Academy) were committed to reducing the burden of inspection visits to NHS Trusts and ensuring that inspection processes were relevant and fit for purpose.

Professor Underwood indicated that he would keep the Academy informed of progress.

COUNCIL FOR HEALTHCARE REGULATORY EXCELLENCE

The Academy would be responding to the above consultation document once the views of all members had been obtained.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CENTRAL CONSULTANTS & SPECIALISTS COMMITTEE

The Chairman reported that the Academy was entitled to six nominees on the CCSC. Mr Alastair McGowan and Mr John Smith were already members of the CCSC and four nominees were needed to replace members of the Academy who had recently demitted office. It was agreed that the following should be invited to represent the Academy:

Professor Janet Husband, Mr Warren Jones, Professor Allan Templeton and Professor James Underwood.

THE INTERCOLLEGIATE GROUP ON NUTRITION

The Academy had been invited to endorse the Foundation Course on Human Nutrition by Professor Shenkin, the Chairman of the Group. Such endorsement would, he believed, alleviate increasing pressure on staff involved in the course, following the introduction of the new consultant contract.

Whilst the Academy did not feel it could endorse the course, it did wish to offer support for its principles.

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGH STREET TESTING

Professor Underwood reported the Royal College of Pathologists' growing concern regarding the three stages of analysis (namely pre-counselling analysis, analysis and post-counselling analysis) provided by in-house pharmacy testing and the statements made to influence customers to have such for-profit tests.

Concerns regarding interpretation, advice and quality assurance were raised and Dr Patricia Wilkie, Chair of the Academy's Patient/Lay Group had previously endorsed these concerns.

It was agreed to write to the Chairman of the Medicines Commission, Professor Parveen Kumar, and Professor Underwood would draft this letter on the Academy's behalf.

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