NEWS

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GPIAG News

GPwSI/PwSI update meeting

The GPIAG is planning an update meeting for GPs, practitioners, nurses and pharmacists with a special interest (or those planning to develop a special interest...) in primary or intermediate care respiratory medicine – on 30th November to 1st December in Milton Keynes. The theme of the meeting will be the provision of respiratory care at the interface between secondary and primary care. There will be an update on the latest health policy developments which might affect intermediate respiratory care from Siân Williams, member of the joint BTS/GPIAG IMPRESS group. There will also be a clinical update on oxygen prescribing, including an interactive session on providing oxygen assessment in the community/hospital. Feedback from previous GPIAG GPwSI training workshops has proved very positive. For further information, please visit the GPIAG website: <http://www.gpiag.org>.

Local nurse networks

The GPIAG Practice Nurse Working Party has identified the importance of UK-wide local groups for nurses delivering respiratory care so that nurses can keep up to date on clinical developments as well as sharing information and ideas for best practice.

The GPIAG would like to get a full picture of what is happening locally and build a respiratory network. We would like to know what is already happening and we invite established groups to be affiliated to the GPIAG. With this in mind, we would be grateful if you could let us know if you are, or a local practice nurse is, a member of a group which is already established. To find out more about the benefits of the group being affiliated to the GPIAG, please send contact details to: info@gpiag.org

GPIAG Opinion Sheet Series 2007

The latest opinion sheet, *Management of stable COPD in primary care*, is currently available on the GPIAG website - <http://www.gpiag.org>. Access to the full range of information and resources is available to full members of the GPIAG on the website.

Launch of Skill Levels Tool for Delivering High Quality Respiratory Care by Practice Nurses

The GPIAG Practice Nurse Working Party (PNWP) is delighted to announce the launch of a Skill Levels document which will assist practice nurses in assessing their own skill level in respiratory care and in identifying their individual educational needs.

Whilst there is a group of practice nurses who have undertaken further education in this area and who have taken a clear lead in primary care, there is a wider community of practice nurses who work on a day-to-day basis providing management of respiratory diseases.

The PNWP has identified a need to provide support for the wider community of practice nurses by developing minimum standards and basic skills sets (intermediate and advanced) – which will support practice nurses in assessing their own skill level in respiratory care. It will also help nurses in securing appropriate training and support – to enable them to deliver optimal standards in respiratory care.

The Skill Levels Tool is available on the GPIAG website – <http://www.gpiag.org>. For further information, please contact the GPIAG on (tel) 05600 497 361 or by email at info@gpiag.org.

Become More Involved with GPIAG

If you are interested in becoming more involved with the GPIAG, please contact us for an informal discussion as to how you can help. You may be interested in standing for election to one of our committees – the research committee, education committee, practice nurse working group, or general committee – or alternatively you might be interested in joining our policy network to help shape the documents and submissions that we prepare when making representation to bodies such as NICE, the Department of Health and the Healthcare Commission. For more information about how you can be more involved please contact us at info@gpiag.org.

British Lung Foundation

World COPD day – BLF urges people at risk of COPD to ask their GP for a lung test

To mark World COPD Day on the 14th November, the British

Lung Foundation (BLF) is urging anyone who thinks they are at risk of COPD to ask their GP for a spirometry test. The BLF is therefore writing to GP clinics across the country urging doctors and nurses to check the lung function of people who are over 35 and who:

- Are breathless
- Have a persistent cough
- Have lots of phlegm
- Are current or ex-smokers

Posters and tear-off postcards are also being sent to GP surgeries across the country to help raise awareness and to ask patients for feedback on whether they asked for and received a spirometry test. The BLF is calling on staff across primary care to support the campaign and to display these in their clinics. GPs will also receive a copy of the BLF's new patient guide 'Breathing Tests' in the mailing.

An estimated three million people in the UK have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), but 2.1 million haven't yet been diagnosed.¹ Despite being the UK's fifth biggest killer, a BLF survey reveals that most people have never even heard of COPD and only 5% have had a spirometry test, the main diagnostic tool for the disease. With the new National Service Framework for COPD due in 2009, the BLF believes it is vital that the 2.1 'missing millions' are found. "Raising the profile of COPD among health professionals is a vital step if we are to find the 2.1 million people in the UK who have COPD but don't know it," says Dame Helena Shovelton, Chief Executive of the British Lung Foundation.

For more information or interviews please contact Kerry Kalcher (tel: 020 7688 5564 or kerry.kalcher@blf-uk.org) or Katherine Huntley (tel: 020 7688 5588 or Katherine.Huntley@blf-uk.org.) Out of hours: 07976 227 076

1. Stang P, Lydick E, Silberman C *et al*. The Prevalence of COPD: Using smoking rates to estimate disease frequency in the general population. *Chest* 2000; **117**: 354S-359S; Lung Report III (2003), British Lung Foundation

Education for Health

Members of the Charity were delighted to participate in the excellent GPIAG Twentieth Anniversary National Primary Care Conference on Respiratory Disease in Primary Care at Keele in June. We are proud of both of our organisations' magnificent achievements of putting primary care management of respiratory diseases at the forefront.

Twentieth Anniversary Celebrations Continue

We are delighted with the positive feedback on the supplement produced as part of our 20th anniversary

celebrations which was included in both the *British Journal of Primary Care Nursing – Respiratory Diseases and Allergy and Cardiovascular Disease* in June/July. Follow the link to see more information at <http://www.educationforhealth.org.uk/pages/bjpcn.asp>. The *British Journal of Primary Care Nursing* is the Official Journal of Education for Health and is free of charge to healthcare professionals. You can register for this online at www.bjpcn.co.uk

The celebrations continued with a party in June attended by many of our staff, trainers, trustees and other people involved with the organisation over many years. This included presentation of the first Education for Health Trainer Awards for Innovation, Team Working, Education and Ambassadorship.

Link Found Between Hay fever and Exam Performance

A new study published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology has found that students who have allergic rhinitis symptoms on an exam day are 40% more likely to drop a grade in their GCSE exams, and this figure rises to 70% if they are taking sedating anti-histamines.² Despite current guidelines advocating the use of widely-available non-sedating medication, 28% of the students taking medication for their symptoms were on a sedating anti-histamine. The study – carried out by Education for Health in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh and Imperial College, London – is the first to look at the impact of hay fever on actual exam performance (as opposed to simulated conditions)

For further information please contact s.walker@educationforhealth.org.uk

2. Walker S, Khan-Wasti S, Fletcher M, Cullinan P, Harris J, Sheikh A. Seasonal allergic rhinitis is associated with a detrimental effect on examination performance in United Kingdom teenagers: Case-control study. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2007;**120**(2):381-7. Epub 2007 Jun 8.

Visit from Chief Nursing Officer

We were delighted to welcome Christine Beasley, the Chief Nursing Officer, to the organisation in June. Our work both in research and education was highly regarded by Chris and we continued to stress the importance of training health care professionals particularly at this time when services are being driven into the community away from hospitals.

Managing Long Term Conditions – New Prospectus

We are pleased to announce the launch of the new Managing Long Term Conditions prospectus, marking the first of Education for Health's new range of prospectuses, designed according to areas of special interest. This is now available to

download from our website <http://www.educationforhealth.org.uk/pages/prospectus/prospectus.asp> and is also available for hard copy posting on request.

It features up-to-date information and prices regarding the courses currently on offer. Our comprehensive range of Open University validated and accredited cardiovascular, diabetes and respiratory courses are all detailed in the prospectus; this includes clear learning outcomes and breakdown summaries of each of the individual short courses and modules.

Prospectuses for Respiratory Disease, Allergic Disease and Cardiovascular Disease will be launched over the coming months.

For further details visit our course pages at www.educationforhealth.org.uk, and to book your place call us directly on +44 (0)1926 493313 or Email: enquiries@educationforhealth.org.uk

Our latest course programme with details of current courses and dates and details of the seven new modules launching this year can also be found on our website.

Graduation Day

Graduation Day took place at Education for Health in Warwick on Saturday 16 June with 15 students collecting their certificates from the Open University. Monica Fletcher (Chief Executive) and Dr Samantha Walker (Director of Education, Research and Development) officiated at the ceremony which was attended by family, guests and Education for Health Trainers. The students have been studying for over three years for their BSc in Respiratory Care and for over two years for their Dip HE in Respiratory Care/Chronic Disease Management. A procession through the streets of Warwick from the headquarters in Church Street to the ceremony in the training centre in Brook Street took place before the graduation ceremony. Nine students graduated in person and six in absentia. After the ceremony, a well-earned glass of champagne and a cream tea finished off a very enjoyable afternoon.

Staff Changes

There have been some significant changes in personnel at Education for Health. We have redesigned our education and research directorates to integrate their activities more closely. Sue Rivers left her post as Director of Education and Quality in May and has taken up her new post as Assistant Dean, School of Lifelong Learning, at Coventry University. Sue played a major part in the development of our successful relationship with the Open University and led the preparation for the recent Open University revalidation which was a major piece of work spanning several months. We wish Sue all the best in her new role. Samantha Walker has been appointed as Director of Education, Research and Development.

Monica Fletcher

Chief Executive, Education for Health
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IPCRG News

IPCRG AGM – new Board and Senate

At our AGM in Stockholm, an amendment to the constitution was considered. The new structure that was agreed included a smaller Board of office holders together with four co-opted members. The intention is to facilitate and improve day-to-day decision-making. An advisory Senate representing all member countries will guide and inform the Board. Members will retain the power to elect the President, Treasurer, and the host country of our biennial conference. This will take effect once it has been approved by the Office of Scottish Charities Regulator.

External affairs

We proudly announce that we are an Organisation in Collaborative Relations with Wonca, the global family doctor organisation.

Education

In addition to the two-side Desktop Helper, our searchable and practical smoking cessation guidelines will be available shortly on our website.

On 4 September we ran an event to take forward the implications of our paper *Can asthma control be improved by understanding the patient's perspective?* *BMC Pulmonary Medicine* 2007;7:8 (22 May 2007): <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2466/7/8>. We looked at the delivery of individualised care and what tools might be used in clinical practice to unearth causes of and responses to poor control. We will publish a report of the event soon.

Research

We are delighted to announce that the HEALTH RCT is now underway thanks to funding from BI/Pfizer UK. The study is researching the impact of a structured exercise programme on patients with mild COPD.

The September Research Sub-committee also received a report on our study 'Risk Factors for Adverse Outcomes of Lower Respiratory Tract Infection Diagnosed in UK General Practice.' We hope to make the findings available soon.

Finally, a reminder! IPCRG Conference 28-31 May 2008, Seville, Spain

The conference website is now up and running in English and

Spanish; <http://ipcrjg-seville2008.unicongress.com/>.

Information and presentations from the last conference are available on: <http://www.theipcrjg.org/conferences/index.php>.

Both the IPCRG and the Conference organisers, GRAP, will be offering travelling bursaries for some colleagues who would otherwise not be able to attend.

Details will be available soon on the conference website and are likely to prioritise those who submit an abstract.

Siân Williams, Executive Officer

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University News

Bradford Post Graduate Diploma for Practitioners with a Special Interest - latest feedback

The third clinical module, and next entry point, for the Post Graduate Diploma/MSc in Respiratory Medicine for Practitioners with a Special Interest is set to start in October 2007. Having studied COPD and Asthma, students will embark on other common respiratory problems, eg. occupational health, restrictive lung disorders, dyspnoea, chronic cough, respiratory infections, and cancers.

Of the course so far, Dr Anthony Fennerty, course tutor and consultant Physician at Harrogate District Hospital, Yorkshire says: "I have been incredibly impressed by the enthusiasm and depth of knowledge of the GPs on our course. From their log books it is clear that they have achieved

a wide range of experience and their written and presentational work has been outstanding. It has been very rewarding for me, learning about the challenges of work in the community from experienced practitioners who are able to reflect on their practice and who have retained their enthusiasm to learn and undertake what is a demanding course – on top of everything else they have to do. It's all very stimulating and certainly keeps me on my toes."

Dr Basil Penney GP and PCT Respiratory Lead, working in Darlington shares the following view: "The Bradford diploma allows those wishing to become a GPwSI to develop their clinical skills alongside other skills required to be an effective ambassador for respiratory service development. The structure of the course encourages closer links with secondary care health professionals and through this has allowed me to set up a local Respiratory Team – incorporating clinical and management representatives from primary and secondary care. We have been able through PBC to set up a community respiratory nursing service and together with secondary care are developing an assisted discharge service for respiratory patients."

For applications, all details can be found at: www.learnonline.nhs.uk/Practitioners+with+Special+Interest or by emailing psi@bradford.nhs.uk.

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