



Annual Reports 2012



The Irish College of General Practitioners

About the Irish College of General Practitioners

The Irish College General Practitioners (ICGP) is the professional body for education, training, research and standards in general practice.

College Activities

- Teaching, training and education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels
- Accreditation of specialist training programmes in general practice
- Operates a professional competence scheme under arrangement with the Medical Council
- Examining body for membership in general practice (MICGP)
- Continuing education and professional development
- Research
- Practice management support through training, advice and consultancy
- General practitioner health
- Public relations and media liaison on behalf of the profession
- General practice publications, guidelines and protocols
- Advice and support to members
- Advocacy on behalf of the profession with external agencies.

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Chief Executive Officer's Report

AUTHOR | MR KIERAN RYAN



During the past 12 months, I have learned new things about our health services but more importantly, I have learnt more about Irish general practice. I have met some really impressive individuals, attended some interesting events, listened to much praise and criticism, but I have always felt supported and guided by our members, the Council, the Executive, and above all, the staff and management team of the College.

There is no doubt that we are at a time of unprecedented change in our health services. This is, of course, in the context of the larger macroeconomic environment in which our country finds itself but in terms of the ICGP and Irish general practice, there are many changes which are much closer to home. The urgent need for GPs at the moment is twofold – to get some sense of certainty or stability emerging in the business of medicine, and for the development of strong clinical leadership to demonstrate and articulate the potential for general practice to positively change the delivery of health services to patients and their relatives.

There is no doubt that the change agenda for the ICGP must be intertwined with the change agenda for general practice and the health services as a whole. I would see that ensuring a heightened awareness of the nature of Irish general practice among decision makers, and indeed within the medical profession itself, is a key mission for the ICGP over the next 12 months.

My predecessor, Fionan, has left an impressive legacy of an institution with a good reputation, financial feasibility, a depth of services to support members and an internationally renowned GP training and examination system. The staff at the ICGP had to undergo many changes such as the co-location of all college administrative staff to Lincoln Place, adjusting to a new CEO, the introduction of new team members, and the introduction of new responsibilities and functions, and at the same time ensure the carrying out of business as usual. I am very grateful for the staff members' co-operation and commitment to our members and the College during this current phase of change.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND CME

The ICGP took on the responsibility of running a professional competence scheme for doctors on behalf of the Medical Council in May 2011. This required a lot of upfront investment in staffing and IT developments. I am appreciative of the patience shown by members of the ICGP as the details of the scheme and how to meet its requirements developed. This is very much a work in progress but we now have a strong infrastructure in place to support the development of the scheme.

It is very apparent that with the advent of mandatory professional competence, the current capacity of the CME small group learning network is insufficient to meet the demand of more than 3,300 doctors registered on our scheme. For the next 12 months, we need to secure a reasonable level of funding from the HSE and then examine the potential for the ICGP to invest in the CME tutor network through appointing further tutors and the provision of more CPD activities. I wish to sincerely thank Dr Mary Sheehan as chair of the Professional Competence Committee and all members of the committee for their continued hard work. The welcome addition to our staff of Ms Jantze Cotter, Professional Competence Scheme Manager, and the excellent support from Ms Maureen Dempsey, Ms Angela Byrne, Dr Claire Collins and Ms Carol White made the establishment of this function so successful.

MEDICAL COUNCIL, GP TRAINING & THE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The Medical Council announced the formal accreditation process for post graduate medical training bodies. To prepare for this, Dr Margaret O’Riordan, Head of Quality and Standards, along with Mr Nick Fenlon, Director of Education, have put together a quality manual for the College and embarked on seeking HETAC accreditation for all College education programmes. This quality management process, along with the leadership of Dr Gerry Mansfield, ICGP National GP Training Director, will ensure that the ICGP and GP training will meet the requirements of the regulator and international standards for post graduate medical training. Our HETAC process will ensure that ICGP educational courses will have parity with third level education provision, and assist GPs in keeping up to date and furthering their professional development, and those interested in attaining a recognised higher degree.

The 2012 HSE Service Plan identifies that the HSE will transfer certain training responsibilities it currently retains to the ICGP to comply with the requirements of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007. This is very significant for the ICGP and will have implications in terms of financial impact, resource impact and the level of direct responsibility the ICGP will have for GP training delivery. I am very grateful for the support of our national director of GP training, Dr Gerard Mansfield, in this regard.

CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT & CLINICAL CARE PROGRAMMES

General practice came quite late to the party in terms of the establishment of the clinical care programmes which were notably influential in the redesign of healthcare delivery. This is new territory for the ICGP and the differences with the hospital sector are the issues related to the GP contract and GP revenue. As the professional training body, there was a need to ensure that the potential of general practice was understood. However, the lack of developments on an updated GP contract made the development of new care models quite difficult. It is safe to say that both the ICGP and I have learned much in relation to healthcare change, reform and advancing the development of the profession without interfering with contractual matters which are clearly within the expertise of others. I am

grateful to Dr David Hanlon, GP Lead Co-ordinator and all the GP leads on the various clinical care programmes for their dedication and expert input to this complex process.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

In 2011, we introduced, in an innovative manner, a 7.5% reduction on the annual subscriptions. We continue to structure our subscriptions to match the income positions of our membership. Less than half of the membership actually pays a full rate. There is no doubt that our members are undergoing major financial strains and we need to be more conscious than ever before about the value that we offer. Ensuring that the college is financially viable into the future is my main mission and will give the College the resources to respond to change and support members. We have additional revenue from the Professional Competence Scheme. The fee is set by the Medical Council. There were no government grants to assist colleges in setting up a scheme and while the income was received in 2011, it is needed for covering the costs to be incurred in 2012 and the set up costs. There is no doubt that over the year we need to develop the range of services and supports to those on the professional competence schemes.

In 2010, the ICGP staff took average pay cuts in the region of 5% and we have reduced our cost base by moving into one location. We need to invest in technology and modern methods of education and training delivery. In addition, our funding from the HSE was reduced by 5% and we see more and more that committees which require GP representation through the ICGP have less and less funding to support GP involvement. In some cases, it falls on the College to support this representation.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr Gerry Cummins, as treasurer, and members of the Finance Committee for their input over the past 12 months.

WHERE TO FROM HERE

The key priorities for the next 12 months are to:

- Complete the implementation of the professional competence schemes.
- Increase the capacity of the CME tutor network.
- Continue to drive down costs and ensure maximum value to members.
- Improve communications with the membership.
- Enhance the understanding of the ICGP's involvement in support of Irish general practice.
- Examine the governance and strategic plan of the College and the roles of our faculties to ensure that we are fit for purpose in these challenging times.

In addition, I hope to at least commence the process of the transference of GP training responsibilities from the HSE to the ICGP.

Finally, I must continue to work with my senior management team and staff to support them in delivering excellence in service, education, training and assessment that is the hallmark of the ICGP.

I am sincerely grateful to the College staff and officers, and the Executive and Council for their support and patience over the past 12 months. I feel fortunate to have a chair such as Dr John Delap who always helps to bring balance in our decision making. Our outgoing president, Dr Rita Doyle and immediate past president, Dr Brendan Day, have represented admirably the profession of general practice and the ICGP. They have also been of immense personal support to me. I also look forward to working with our incoming president, Prof Bill Shannon. Finally, I wish to thank all our members and trainees for their engagement and continued support for the College.

President's Report

AUTHOR | DR RITA DOYLE

I started my presidency with a very warm welcome at the AGM in May 2011. I was thrilled and honoured to be proposed for the position and a little apprehensive as to how I would fare at the job.



I had three main objectives:

1. I wanted to represent the College at functions in order to make sure that the face of Irish general practice was known and respected. I attended quite a number of functions on your behalf and was always made to feel welcome. I was often reminded of the former president of the ICGP, the late Dr Ellard Eppel, who, after about one month in office, declared he had put on a stone as the hospitality was so generous. The highlight for me was the conferring of the new graduates in October. It was a great thrill to see all the stunning bright people becoming members of the College and see that general practice is in good hands.

2. I wished to progress the foundation of a group at the College to represent doctors who were within 10 years of retirement, either side. I am happy to report that this group had their inaugural meeting at the Winter Meeting in Athlone in November, and is to have an educational meeting at this year's AGM. The first message on their new found discussion board happened on Wednesday, April 11 2012, which I hope will thrive. We owe a debt of gratitude to Dr Matthew G Fay for initialling proposing this group at the AGM in 2010.

3. I expressed a desire to make contact with the real membership. In my year as vice president, a couple of GPs had asked me if I would travel to their faculties as president. I had said, "Just ask and I will try to be there". Apart from my own faculty and the Kildare faculty, no one asked, so I did not achieve this aim. This may well reflect that the CME groups are perhaps assuming more importance than the faculties. It does behove us centrally to make more contact with the ordinary members and I think the recent ezine initiative will help towards that.

My year in office has flown. During this time, I received enormous support from the Executive and from the ICGP centrally. To Kieran, Dermot Margaret and Nick, a real warm thank you, and to all the administration staff – not least of them, Orla Sherlock – I am hugely impressed with your enthusiasm and support.

Padraig, my non-medical husband, travelled with me to many functions and was an unflinching support, and my adult children tolerated my absences with much patience.

I thank Brendan Day for his support and I wish Bill Shannon as positive an experience as I have had.

Chairman's Report

AUTHOR | DR JOHN DELAP



Government policy directs us towards universal health insurance and GP care free at the point of use. The December budget outlined the plan to give a GP visit card to all people on the long term illness scheme in 2012 and to include those on high tech medicines in 2013. All commentators agree about the crucial role of general practice in the delivery of health care. Government policy places general practice and primary care at the centre. It is clear that present structures do not have the capacity to deal with the planned changes. We face significant challenges in the effort to deliver effective health care with a diminishing budget. The College will work with all stakeholders to support general practitioners as they adapt to the changes in the health system and work to improve the quality of care to patients. We have had a number of constructive meetings with Minister Reilly and Roisin Shortall, Minister of State with Responsibility for Primary care. A meeting is planned with Kathleen Lynch, Minister of State for Mental Health.

Kieran Ryan has completed his first year as CEO. Kieran has adapted well to his new position. He has a clear view of the role of the College and our relationships with other bodies. With Margaret O'Riordan, Head of Quality and Standards, Dermot Folan, Chief Operating Officer and the staff at Lincoln Place, we are assured of a sound administrative base and innovative management to support the College Executive in implementing the policies of the Council.

The Medical Council professional competence schemes are now firmly established. It is important that you submit the return of your professional development endeavours. The College's eportfolio provides a straightforward mechanism for recording your activities. Our eportfolio was nominated for a health service award this year. Jantze Cotter, Professional Competence Manager, travelled to meetings in all parts of the country to discuss the implementation of the scheme.

Twenty eight years after the foundation of the College, we are undertaking a review of our structures and governance with the assistance of Prospectus Consulting. It is vital that our systems are fit to respond to the changing needs of members. A preliminary report will be presented to the Council at its next meeting. Any changes in structure will be discussed at the Council before being brought to the AGM for approval in 2013. Associated with the structural review will be a review of the ICGP Strategic Plan.

The executive members meet on a regular basis with the IMO GP subcommittee. These meetings have helped to clarify the complimentary roles of each organisation and to exchange information about developments that affect general practice.

We await further discussions with the HSE about the transfer of responsibility for postgraduate training to the ICGP. As this change is part of the HSE service plan, it is likely to happen this year. The programme for the alternative route to membership is getting under way. This will facilitate established GPs who did not have the opportunity to receive postgraduate training to attain College membership and specialist registration.

The CME small group network faces increasing demands by GPs who wish to join groups. Due to the recruitment embargo, tutors who retire will not be replaced. The usual term is seven years of service. Many have been in their post for much longer. This situation is not sustainable. We are working with the HSE to resolve this impasse.

The chronic disease programmes have been under development for more than two years. These programmes commenced under the direction of hospital specialists. Now there is a GP lead associated with each programme. Only if the role of the GP lead is given parity with the hospital lead can the programmes have any chance of being effective. The implementation of chronic disease care will require a change in our relationship with hospital teams and new ways of working. There are many challenges to resolve before these changes can be implemented.

I extend a personal word of thanks for the support of all members of the Executive, Kieran Ryan, Margaret O'Riordan and Dermot Folan, and to Caroline Murtagh who provides administrative support to the Council.

Honorary Treasurer's Report

**AUTHOR | DR GERRY CUMMINS,
HONORARY TREASURER**



It gives me great pleasure, as treasurer of the Irish College of General Practitioners, to present my report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2011. The financial statements in respect of the year show that the College had an operating surplus of €815,201 for the year. This was a very satisfactory and pleasing result given the very challenging economic background with which the Irish economy struggled last year.

The income of the College across the majority of sources was marginally ahead and this factor, when coupled with the reduction in operating costs, assisted in achieving the surplus as previously stated. The College embarked on a cost saving programme in 2010 which was continued into the 2011 financial year. This was coupled with the relocation of all staff members and facilities back to the College headquarters at Lincoln Place. As expected, these factors contributed to the favourable financial results. It should be mentioned that the vast majority of the costs associated with the refurbishment are treated as capital expenditure and, as such, capitalised on the balance sheet and were not charged against the income of the College during the year. The additions to fixed assets in 2011 amounted to €434,372.

The College surplus for the year was assisted through the roll out of the Professional Competence Scheme. The development of courses and the roll out of a full range of services will reduce this surplus on an ongoing basis due to the additional costs that shall be incurred with the provision of these services.

The surplus during the year leaves the College in an improved position vis-à-vis its accumulated reserves. The level of reserves which the College had retained given its time in existence was not particularly robust and could have left the College exposed should there have been any significant change in its fortunes. It is hoped that this strengthening of the College's balance sheet can continue for a period to facilitate the College with a firm financial footing for future developments and plans.

I think it is appropriate that the members are mentioned for their continued support of the College through their payment of the annual subscription. The College is deeply indebted to its members for their continued support. The annual report outlines the full range of programmes, supports and services that the members can avail of, all of which exist from their continued support. In recognition of the economic climate, the level of subscriptions has not increased and a substantial discount applied to all members who avail of early payment plans.

I would like to thank Kieran Ryan, Chief Executive Officer, for the support and assistance he offered during the year, and his continued safeguarding of the College through his continued guidance, direction and control.

I would also like to thank my fellow Finance Committee members and our auditors and accountants for their continued support and assistance.

All relevant details from the financial statements are available on the College website (www.icgp.ie) and a copy of the full financial statements is available from the College on application.

The Irish College of General Practitioners Limited
(A company limited by guarantee)

Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31st December 2011

| | Note | 2011 € | 2010 € |
|---|-----------|------------------|-------------|
| Income | | | |
| Subscriptions received | | 2,260,313 | 2,081,467 |
| Course income and fees | | 977,834 | 942,880 |
| M.I.C.G.P. Examination | | 380,711 | 358,635 |
| Conferences | | 417,208 | 319,286 |
| Grants: HSE | | 354,070 | 148,825 |
| Sundry Income | | - | 12,718 |
| | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 1 | 4,390,136 | 3,863,811 |
| | | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Establishment | | 205,183 | 281,728 |
| Administration | | 2,011,133 | 2,061,014 |
| Programmes | | (91,582) | 301,171 |
| Communications, publications, library and related services | | 381,495 | 166,348 |
| Courses | | 729,492 | 767,292 |
| Conferences | | 272,167 | 197,190 |
| Loss on disposal of fixed assets | | 16,955 | - |
| | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | | 3,524,843 | 3,774,743 |
| | | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |
| Operating result for the year | | 865,293 | 89,068 |
| Interest receivable and similar income | 4 | 6,141 | 2,428 |
| Interest payable and similar charges | 3 | (56,632) | (36,787) |
| | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Surplus / (deficit) before taxation | | 814,802 | 54,709 |
| Taxation | | - | - |
| | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Surplus / (deficit) for year | | 814,802 | 54,709 |
| | | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |
| Statement of total recognised gains and losses | | | |
| Total recognised surplus / (deficit) relating to the year | | 814,802 | 54,709 |
| Prior year adjustment | 23 | - | 634,834 |
| | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total recognised gains / losses since last annual report | | 814,802 | 689,543 |
| | | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

All income and expenditure and the surplus for the year arise from continuing activities.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 31st March 2012 and signed on its behalf by:

Dr. John Delap
Director

Dr. Gerard Cummins
Director

The Irish College of General Practitioners Limited
(A company limited by guarantee)

Balance Sheet
at 31st December 2011

| | Note | 2011 € | 2011 € | 2010 € |
|--|------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Fixed assets | | | | |
| Tangible assets | 8 | | 2,241,142 | 2,204,029 |
| Financial assets | 9 | | 500,195 | 500,195 |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | | | 2,741,337 | 2,704,224 |
| Current assets | | | | |
| Debtors | 11 | 1,039,346 | | 674,897 |
| Cash at bank | | 1,519,192 | | 646,693 |
| | | <hr/> | | <hr/> |
| | | 2,558,538 | | 1,321,590 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 12 | (2,576,144) | | (2,182,545) |
| | | <hr/> | | <hr/> |
| Net current liabilities | | | (17,606) | (860,955) |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total assets less current liabilities | | | 2,723,731 | 1,843,269 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year | 13 | | (557,281) | (491,621) |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Net assets | | | 2,166,450 | 1,351,648 |
| | | | ===== | ===== |
| Reserves | | | | |
| Accumulated surplus | | | 2,166,450 | 1,351,648 |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Members funds | 15 | | 2,166,450 | 1,351,648 |
| | | | ===== | ===== |

Approved by the Board of Directors on 31st March 2012 and signed on its behalf by:

Dr. John Delap
Director

Dr. Gerard Cummins
Director

Membership Committee Report

**AUTHOR | DR DARAGH O'NEILL, COMMITTEE
CHAIR**



INTRODUCTION

The remit of the Membership Committee is to encourage, foster and co-ordinate membership growth, participation and activity at faculty level. As the standing committee, the Membership Committee responds to the needs of members on the following programmes:

- Management in Practice (MIP).
- Health in Practice (HIP).
- General Practice Information Technology Programme (GPIT).
- Network of Establishing General Practitioners (NEGs).
- The College's faculty and regional network(s).

In addition, it is the role of the Membership Committee to ensure that the College and its services are effectively marketed to members, to maintain a high level of satisfaction among members and to monitor this on an ongoing basis.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE PAST YEAR

- ICGP Leadership Course for General Practice.
 - Launch of ICGP GroupScheme for members and practice staff.
 - Publishing of the results of the Membership Needs Survey Forum 2012.
 - Introduction of the ICGP Wall Chart in conjunction with the ICGP Diary.
 - ICGP Sunset Project.
 - NEGS Winter Meeting.
 - NEGS framework document.
 - Supporting the ICGP ezine.
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DISCUSSION

I have come to the end of my term in the role as chair of the Membership Committee.

Having spent a number of years grappling with membership needs, I was pleased to see the completion and evaluation of the Members Needs Survey which was carried out in late 2010 was finally published in 2011. This ambitious and important piece of research was one of the most comprehensive studies carried out on the entire College membership and the results were outlined in a feature article in the January 2012 edition of Forum. In recent years, the College has embarked on a number of developments and the survey reaffirmed the members' approval of the work undertaken. The information obtained will continue to help inform future ICGP strategic planning and the College has committed to responding to the changing needs of its membership.

The results of this study showed a high level of satisfaction and engagement with the support and services provided by the College. However, the costs involved were an issue for many GPs in the current climate. In response to this feedback from members, the College has reduced membership fees for 2012 by 7.5% and continues to look at means of providing better value for money. Other responses to the findings include:

- Reduced course fees by additional sponsorship.
 - Enhanced relationships with other professional organisations.
 - The modularisation of educational courses as well as an increase in the use of online presentations and information tutorials from meetings.
 - Advanced professional competence delivery and resourcing, utilising both online via the ePortfolio, and personal support and training to assist GPs in fulfilling their legal requirement for the scheme, along with guidance on audit processing.
 - Local engagement – Increased interaction by ICGP representatives at local level and enhanced leadership from within College membership.
 - GPIT – Local roadshows and the creation of instructions for each software system regarding creating a disease register and extracting data for audit purposes.
 - Library and Information Services – This service will provide online journal access for 2012 for members and advanced catalogue search capabilities. An online information skills module has been created.
 - Website – Plans for the integration of the College's Quality in Practice (QiP) quick reference guides with GP software for use in consultations and an improved website search facility are ongoing.
 - Management in Practice – A Review of proposals for an onsite consultancy service.
 - Research – Improved dissemination of material including the publication of booklets of research abstracts. The Research and Education Foundation grants have been re-established, and an audit toolkit has been developed and includes sample audits.
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- Faculty Structure – A comprehensive overview of the faculty structure will follow to foster an awareness of the College's structure, role and function on a local level. This will also feed into the current governance review being undertaken by Prospectus.

The inaugural ICGP Leadership Course for General Practice (delivered with the support of the DCU Business School) provides participants with knowledge and skills to enable them to become effective leaders and influencers of change at practice, College and healthcare planning level. The 19 participants re-enforced the desire that exists among the membership to become involved in the development and structures of the society we serve and the healthcare service they deserve.

The ICGP Group Scheme is provided as an enhanced membership benefit to all members of the College and their staff.

The College's Network of Establishing GPs continues to go from strength to strength under the directorship of Dr Mary Glancy (with the ongoing support of Dr Sinead Murphy). This initiative will prove to be invaluable as a stepping stone to the further integration of newer members into the fuller spectrum of College activities.

The Sunset Programme (current title), promoted by our president Dr Rita Doyle and Dr Matthew Fay (Kildare Faculty) will be supportive of members in the later stages of their professional careers and encourage their involvement with the College so that the organisation and profession benefit from their wealth of knowledge and experience.

The Communications Committee has launched the ICGP ezine which aims to be a faster medium to pass on snippets about College activities. It is hoped that this will encourage greater interest in the many activities that the College is involved in and be a reminder of the services that exist.

PERSONAL NOTE

Like many others who have been involved with the College, I feared the phone call from Fionan O'Cuinegain or Margaret O'Riordain six years ago. There would be a frosty reception at home when I piped up "Great News, I have a new role!"

Today my feelings have changed. I consider myself honoured to have been offered the opportunity to become closely involved in the activities of the College over the last number of years. I have experienced College activities on a local, regional, national and international level. The opportunity afforded me has been invaluable to me as a representative of my specialty as a GP both personally and professionally. I have gained insight, understanding, knowledge, skills and even a little attitudinal adjustment along the way but chief among these, is a sense of pride and privilege. I have felt pride in my role as a representative of the art of general practice in Ireland and privileged to have served alongside leaders like Mark Walsh, John Delap and the other chairs of the standing committees. I feel privileged to have worked alongside Fionán O'Cuineagáin and to have had a share in his immeasurable grasp of Irish general practice. I also feel privileged to have been in office when his successor Kieran Ryan was appointed. I am confident he will lead us through these difficult times as a strong, cohesive and honourable group of professionals.

I am particularly pleased that the College Executive embraced and fostered the Leadership Programme when I first mooted it. Having been involved in the inception, design and delivery of the programme, I felt particularly chuffed last week when the 14 graduands presented their vision for the future of general practice. I am grateful to the Mason Family who have supported this programme with a bursary in honour of the late Dr John Mason.

I would like to thank all the members of the Membership Committee who give their free time in their busy lives to give their knowledge and commitment to a better future for members of the ICGP. I would like to thank my fellow executive members for their support and forbearance, Dr Margaret O’Riordan for inducting me into College life from a young age, and Dr Sinead Murphy for her support on many occasions.

Finally behind every doctor there is a good team. Niamh Killeen, Margaret Cunnane and Orla Sherlock have been tolerant in the extreme and always helpful. Dermot has been a rock and has taught me recently to say “No, thank you!”

Management in Practice Report

AUTHOR | DERMOT FOLAN, (ACTING) MIP DIRECTOR



INTRODUCTION

The Management in Practice Programme continues to support College members and their practices as follows:

- **Training** – Courses for general practitioners, practice managers and practice staff.
- **Information provision** through online publications and guidelines.
- **Direct advice and consultation** with individual members and practices – telephone advisory service and online information service/resource via www.icgp.ie.
- **Practice Consultancy** – Consulting with practices on a broad range of management issues including business planning and development, practice set up, practice continuity/succession planning, organisational review, human resource management, premises, health and safety, and quality initiatives. Due to increased work demands/responsibilities, the programme will increasingly have to be outsourced and refer requests to external provider(s). Proposals in this regard are currently under consideration.
- **Mediation service** provided both to practice partners and in relation to employer/employee issues. The outsourcing of this work/provision is under active consideration.
- **Referral** to external professional advisor network and resources. The various networks of professional experts are under review by the director.
- Supporting the **occupational health** needs of GPs and practice personnel (refer to the Health in Practice Programme report).

OTHER MEMBERS OF PROGRAMME TEAM

- Ms Margaret Cunnane, Administrator, Management in Practice Programme.
- Dr Andrée Rochfort, Director, Health in Practice Programme.
- Mr Barry O'Brien, Course Tutor, Diploma in Management in Practice and Management in Practice and GP Registrar Courses.
- Ms Romy Moloney, Course Tutor, Practice Staff Training Programme.
- Mr Colin McGlynn, CMG Consultants.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Training Courses

Management in Practice Diploma Course: September 2011-May 2012

This is the fifth course to be delivered since the commencement of the MIP Diploma programme. The course is aimed at meeting the practical management needs of GPs and practice managers. There are 24 participants (GPs, practice managers and other staff with managerial responsibilities) currently enrolled.

The course format, which includes a formal assessment and practice based project work, has a core focus on bringing about substantive change in the participant's practice. Many graduates of the course successfully competed in the ICGP/Aviva Health Quality Improvement Awards. Key to the success of the course is the full involvement by the practice and not solely that of the participant.

The evaluation of feedback from past course participants indicates a very high satisfaction level among participants.

(A detailed participant evaluation is provided in Appendix 1)

Course Director: Mr Dermot Folan.

Course Administrator: Ms Margaret Cunnane.

Course Tutor: Mr Barry O'Brien, Practice/Business Development Manager, Abbey House Medical Centre.

Delivery: The course is run over one academic year and consists of 14 units. It is delivered through a combination of workshops, module reading and course assignments. These include two reflective learning portfolios, four short essay questions (SEQs), a 'Quality Improvement in the Practice' project and participation on the online discussion boards.

Essay assignments are based on common practice scenarios and are marked by a panel of general practitioners/practice managers, and past participants of the course who act as assessors.

Learning is supported through the college website www.icgp.ie, which includes a discussion board facility, and email communication.

The course utilises the specialist expertise available at the College as well as external resources. The external accreditation (HETAC) of this course is currently being considered.

General Practice Registrar Management in Practice Certificate Course: September 2011-May 2012

This is the fifth consecutive year that this course has been successfully delivered.

It is specifically designed to meet the practice management educational needs of GP registrars with the objective of equipping the GP registrar with the basic knowledge of the business management principles, skills and competencies needed for a successful commencement in professional practice. The course is

reflective of the core curriculum for general practice training and the related learning outcomes for the practice management category of the curriculum.

Delivery: The course is run over one academic year and consists of 13 units, delivered through a combination of workshops, module reading and course assignments. These include two reflective learning portfolios, a career progression plan and assignments via the course web-based discussion board.

A key objective of the course is to enable participants to achieve a greater appreciation of the management and organisation of the GP training practices to which they, as GP registrars, are assigned. The active involvement and cooperation of the trainer is a requirement for the enrolment of the GP registrar. The course utilises the specialist expertise available at the College as well as external resources.

To date, 77 third and fourth year registrars have undertaken the course. We plan to offer the Management in Practice and the GP Registrar Certificate course again in September 2012.

Of significance is that the numbers registering for the 2011-2012 course were slightly down on previous years. The absence of the training grants would appear to be a factor as course evaluations from past participants strongly indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the course.

(A detailed participant evaluation is provided in Appendix 2.)

Course Director: Mr Dermot Folan.

Course Administrator: Ms Margaret Cunnane.

Course Tutor: Mr Barry O'Brien, Practice/Business Development Manager, Abbey House Medical Centre.

Leadership Course: October 2011-April 2012

The first course in leadership for general practice commenced in October 2011. This is a pilot course aimed at promoting leadership in the profession and also addressing succession planning for the ICGP. The MIP programme director has worked actively with the Course Development Committee and with Ms Margaret Cunnane, MIP Administrator, to deliver the course. The course is delivered in collaboration with the DCU Business School.

Course Description: The course is for general practitioners who are seeking to develop their knowledge and skills in the field of leadership. Participants will be able to bring the knowledge and skills obtained back to their practice, embed lessons learned into the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP), and apply acumen to healthcare contexts where they currently, or will in the future, play a leadership role. This course has the following four central objectives:

- To provide general practitioners in Ireland with leadership training.
 - To cultivate and mentor future leaders for general practice in Ireland and for the ICGP.
 - To support general practitioners as leaders in the wider community context.
 - To provide participants with an opportunity to advance their professional and personal development.
-

There are 14 participants on the current course.

Course Principal: Mr Dermot Folan, MIP Director.

Course Tutor: Dr John Loonam, DCU Business School.

Course Administrator: Ms Margaret Cunnane.

It is hoped that the current Leadership for General Practice course will also foster new leaders of general practice in order to meet the current and future challenges for both the organisation and the profession.

Dr John Mason Bursary

We are grateful to the family of Dr John Mason for providing the Dr John Mason Prize, which will be presented in recognition of high achievement to one course participant each year, and supports the development and delivery of this course.

Practice Staff Training Course

This course is designed to give practice staff an opportunity to develop their functional roles (as receptionist, secretary or administrator) and increase their contribution and support to the clinical providers in the practice. Feedback from both GP employers and practice staff alike remains consistently positive. We are currently developing assessment methods and exploring the external accreditation of the course.

Two practice staff courses were delivered in Dublin in September/October 2011 and in March 2012. A total of 26 participants attended the courses.

Course Tutor: Ms Romy Moloney, Practice Manager.

(A detailed participant evaluation is provided in Appendix 3)

CONTRIBUTION TO OTHER PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

- A Guide to Data Protection Legislation for Irish General Practice (revised publication) was launched at the Summer School in Kilkenny in June 2011. This publication was produced in co-operation with the National GPIT Group and the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.
 - Management in Practice section of the College Year Book and Diary.
-

EXTERNAL PRESENTATIONS/TRAINING UNDERTAKEN DIRECTLY OR FACILITATED BY THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR AND PROGRAMME PERSONNEL IN 2011/2012

ICGP Conferences

- April 2012 – Spring Meeting, IMI, Dublin.
- May 2011 – AGM, Galway.
The increasing risk of Revenue audit and implications for GPs and general practice.
Presenter: Mr Liam Kenny, Tax Director, Grant Thornton Financial and Taxation Consultants.
- June, 2011 – Fifth ICGP Summer School, Kilkenny.

Workshops

- Practice Management – Some common HR challenges and solutions for the GP and Practice Manager(s).
Presenter: Siobhan Browne (SBA Associates)/Dermot Folan (MIP, ICGP).
- November, 2011 – ICGP Winter Meeting, Athlone.
Human Elements of Partnership Agreements.
Presenter: Dr Gerry Mansfield, ICGP, National Director of Specialist Training.

The acting director of the MIP programme has made presentations/conducted workshops for a number of external organisations including group practices during the year.

GP Specialist Training Programmes

- TCD/HSE General Practice Specialist Training programme. Third and fourth year GP registrars.

On Site Practice Consultancy/Mediation

- Provided to a number of practices, this service is ongoing but is limited due to conflicting commitments.

Course Teaching

- Diploma in Management in Practice 2011/2012.
- Management in Practice for the GP Registrar Certificate 2011/2012.

GP training programmes and the CME tutor network have been supported by the programme in sourcing practice management educational resources throughout the year.

Human Resource Compliance for General Practice Service (HRC)

This further enhances the existing service provided by the programme to GPs in the area of employment regulations. The service provided is on site/in practice support and advice, enabling GPs to become fully compliant with their legal obligations as employers and improving human resources management in the practice.

PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE PROVISION

GPIT Course

GPIT is designed to meet the needs of practice managers and other non-clinical staff. Consideration is being given to the development of a training course on increasing IT uptake and efficiencies for all computer users in the practice (clinical and administrative).

Half Day and One Day Seminars/Workshops

- A number of one day modules/seminars are planned to update the skills and knowledge of practice managers and other practice staff. It is hoped that these will be made available in the near future.
- A series of half day seminars/workshops on managing the practice in the current adverse economic climate is being considered.

ADVISORY/INFORMATION SERVICE

Direct Access Advisory Service

College members continue to access the service daily by phone, fax and email on a wide variety of management issues.

With the current economic climate, the service has seen an increase in employment, GMS related issues, GP taxation issues, and in particular requests for advice on cost reduction in the practice.

Forum

The monthly Management in Practice – Questions and Answers column continues to reflect practical management issues occurring in everyday practice and this, together with relevant commissioned articles, provides a platform for the dissemination of management information for members.

Web Resources

The development and updating of the Management in Practice section of the College website is ongoing.

Discussion Board

An online discussion board facility is provided to past participants of the Management in Practice courses and gives practical support, and facilitates continuing interaction with course colleagues.

HEALTH IN PRACTICE PROGRAMME

The Health in Practice Programme comes under the remit of the Management in Practice Programme. The Health in Practice Programme report is provided separately by Dr Andrée Rochfort, HIPP Director.

The acting director of the Management in Practice Programme also fulfils the dual brief of chief operating officer of the College, with specific responsibility for the following areas: the MICGP Examination, the Certification Committee, the Network of Establishing General Practitioners, and membership. (Please refer to separate reports under the relevant headings.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the assistance and contribution of general practitioner members from around the country and their staff who have given freely of their time and expertise on many aspects of the programme. Graduates of our courses have also contributed greatly to the increase in knowledge of the management of general practice. The input from the diploma course assessors, in particular, is appreciated.

The continued contribution and expertise of Mr Barry O'Brien is much appreciated and I would also like to express our thanks for the assistance of Ms Jean Hubbard, Practice Manager, Medical Centre Waterford.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the Management in Practice Programme's administrator Ms Margaret Cunnane.

APPENDIX 1: DIPLOMA IN MANAGEMENT IN PRACTICE – EVALUATION SUMMARY

Presentation and Format of the Diploma in Management in Practice

The majority of participants rated the following formats as “Excellent” ¹

- Written Modules.
- Presentations.
- Support.
- Workshops.
- Discussion Boards.
- Group Discussion.
- Presenters.
- Assignments.

Selection of Comments Taken from Online Evaluation and Participant Reflective Learning Portfolios: Course Participants 2010-2011 ²

“Exceed any learning expectations that I had when I first embarked upon it.”

“The practice is far more organised since I undertook this course.”

“Staff members are clear as to their roles.”

“Our financial accounts are now much more organised.”

“Being organised has the knock on effect of making the practice a much calmer place for staff to work in and for patients to attend.”

“Has been a wonderful learning experience and thoroughly enjoyed.”

“The course has been extremely well thought out and well organised.”

“The SEQs enhanced the learning experience.”

“A superb course, which I will be highly recommending to others.”

“Provided me with a very approachable framework from which to tackle almost any problem.”

“The practical days were undoubtedly the most worthwhile aspect of the course.”

¹ Rating scale, Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Average, Poor

² The 2011-2012 participants’ evaluation will be available in June, 2012

“Would recommend the course to other colleagues.”

“This course motivated me to improve as a person and organise my business in a better way.”

“We learned a lot without any stress and embarrassment. The whole course was very practical, business orientated and tailored to adult learning situations.”

“Learning was enhanced by the involvement of both clinical and non-clinical colleagues.”

“Achieved my targets in increasing the profitability in all areas of the practice”

APPENDIX 2: MANAGEMENT IN PRACTICE AND THE GP REGISTRAR CERTIFICATE COURSE

Summary of Participant Course Evaluation

1 Learning Goals

All participants indicated that they achieved their learning goals and that they improved their knowledge, management skills and competencies, and indicated a positive change of attitude to practice management.

2 Impact

All participants indicated that the course had a positive impact with regard to assisting their trainer, practice systems and the financial performance of the practice.

3 Approach to the Management of a Practice

All participants indicated that the course had a major effect on their approach to the management of a GP practice.

4 Delivery of Services to Patients

All participants indicated that the course had a positive impact on their approach to the delivery of services to patients.

5 Course Delivery

The aspect of the course that was most beneficial was attendance at the workshop and discussion board participation.

6 Course Assignments

Participants found all assignments were educationally beneficial, the scenarios realistic and the completion times reasonable.

7 Relevance to GP Registrar Year(s)

In rating the relevancy of the course to the GP registrar years and the immediate post graduation period, participants indicated relevancy as follows: Absolutely essential – 56%, very relevant – 44%

8 Overall Rating of Course

Scale 10 (excellent) to 1 (very poor)

A total of 56% gave the course a rating of 10, 19% gave a rating of 9 and 25% gave a rating of 8. All participants indicated that they would recommend the course to other GP registrars and to their training programmes.

9 Should the Course be Compulsory for GP Registrars?

The majority of participants felt that the course should be compulsory for all GP registrars.

10 Integration of the Course Within the GP Training Programme

All participants stated that GP registrars would benefit from the integration of this course within the GP Training Programme.

Selection of comments taken from an Online Evaluation and Participant Reflective Learning Portfolios – Course Participants 2010-2011³

- “This course is so important for trainees and GPs. Highly recommended.”
- “I would never have acquired this essential information if I had not done the course. As GP trainees, this essential learning curve can go unnoticed and unappreciated in our every day work. I feel much more confident moving away from the scheme and becoming self-employed.”
- “Very beneficial. Got a lot out of it. Would recommend it to any GP registrar/qualified GP. Empowering.”
- “Really enjoyable course. Good practical knowledge. Excellent resource material. I am definitely going to recommend that the current third years on my scheme apply to do it next year.”
- “I thoroughly enjoyed the course.”
- “I also learnt that time is the commodity in general practice.”
- “I have definitely had a low level of radar switched to ‘on’ constantly for any issues surrounding management, and am constantly asking myself, ‘How would I deal with this situation if I was in charge?’”
- “I would highly recommend the course and perhaps it will become part of GP training as it is just as vital as clinical aspects of the job.”
- “Training so far has been focused on clinical issues but this course made me realise how important good management is if I am to provide a good clinical service to patients.”
- “Absolutely super course. Additional day attendance would be useful as I felt I learned more on these days.”
- “More involvement and support from the trainers would be of benefit”.

³ The 2011-2012 participants’ evaluation will be available in June 2012

APPENDIX 3

Selection of Comments Taken From an Online Evaluation – Practice Staff Course Participants 2011-2012

“I thoroughly enjoyed the course. It was my first time at a course where I didn’t at any point feel myself ‘nodding off’. The pace was quick and extremely interesting and beneficial.”

“I think this was a very beneficial course. It is great to meet people that are in the same environment and get their feedback on different situations.”

“The course was very good; lots of very useful information and I am very happy to have been part of a very nice group of people and I took away a lot from it.”

“I really enjoyed the course. Because the course tutor is working in a practice, we knew she understood what our jobs entail and could help us with our queries/frustrations, etc. This course should be mandatory for all receptionists, secretaries and PMs. Also, it would be great if there was a refresher course a year after.”

National General Practice Information Technology (GPiT) Group Report



AUTHOR | DR BRIAN O'MAHONY, PROJECT MANAGER

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The GPiT Group is a collaboration between the Irish College of General Practitioners, the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health and Children. There are two parts to the group, an education section with a national co-ordinator, four regional GPiT co-ordinators and a panel of expert GPiT advisors, and a projects section with Dr Brian O'Mahony as project manager.

PROJECT TASKS DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

- Working with Healthlink and the National Cancer Control Programme on electronic cancer referrals from GP practice software systems.
- Communicating the needs of GPs and primary care to developers of information systems throughout the health services.
- Membership of the Project Board of the National Integrated Medical Imaging System (NIMIS) Project, which is bringing digital radiology to hospitals and electronic radiology reports to GPs.
- Working with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner on writing Data Protection Guidelines for GPs in a project led by Dr Brian Meade.
- Promoting interoperability and health informatics standards in the health services.
- Writing monthly IT questions and answers for Forum, the journal of the Irish College of General Practitioners. Available at www.gpit.ie/faq.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

- Five GP practice software systems are now certified: Complete GP, Health One, Helix Practice Manager, medtech32 and Socrates.
-

- The certified GP practice software systems have the capability to send electronic breast, prostate and lung cancer referrals to the cancer centres.
- A range of publications and reports on topics such as information security, the appropriate usage of the internet and scanning, are available at www.gpit.ie.

FUTURE PLANS

- Continue to work with major national information systems, such as the National Integrated Medical Imaging System (NIMIS) and the National Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS).
- Expand the range of electronic referrals available from GP practice software systems to include general referrals and specialist referrals.
- Work to improve electronic communication between GPs and the health services, particularly through structured messaging and Healthlink.
- Establish a secure email system for GPs to communicate patient identifiable clinical information to HSE staff in primary and secondary care.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

Ms Niamh Killeen, email Niamh.Killeen@icgp.ie.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Available at www.icgp.ie/gpit.

GPIT Programme Report

**AUTHOR | DR BRIAN MEADE, PROGRAMME
DIRECTOR**



REGIONAL CO-ORDINATORS

- Dr Frank Hill (Southern region).
- Dr Kieran Murphy (Western region).
- Dr Keith Perdue (Eastern region).
- Dr Conor O'Shea (Dublin/North East).
- Dr John MacCarthy (with responsibility for the National Electronic Referral Pilot Project).

GPIT ADVISORS

- Dr Donal Buckley (Dublin).
- Dr John Sweeney (North West).
- Dr Barry O'Donovan (Galway/Western).
- Dr Fergus McKeagney (Midlands).
- Dr Anne Lynott (Dublin).
- Mr Paul Gaffney (North East).
- Dr Martin White (North East).
- Dr John Cox (South East).

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME

The training and education programme was re-established in April 2011 with the aim of providing advice, support and training to GPs in relation to ICT issues. We also have an important role in representing GPs on a wide range of local and national ICT committees.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

The programme has had a busy past 12 months which have included the following:

GPIT Road Shows

The GPIT training programme ran a series of workshops around the country in 2012. The purpose of these workshops was to highlight important work that had been carried out by the GPIT group and others, and to encourage GPs to adopt the changes and developments brought about by this work. Another aim was to assist GPs in the challenge of fulfilling their practice audit and to ensure GPs are ready to manage chronic disease using their existing practice management software.

The meetings covered electronic cancer referrals, practice audits, IT and chronic disease, data protection and the national template letter. The meetings were very well attended and the feedback from GPs was very positive. So far, we have held GPIT road shows in Dublin, Cork, Tullamore and Limerick.

The National Referral Template Form

This area of activity was managed by GPIT facilitator, Dr Jack MacCarthy. The idea of a national referral template arose at a GPIT facilitators meeting in March 2010. Dr MacCarthy had done some preliminary work in this area and had researched examples of standard referral templates from other countries. The group devised the first version of the template and this was given added impetus when HIQA produced their report, Report and Recommendations on Patient Referrals from General Practice to Outpatients and Radiology Services, Including the National Standard for Patient Referral Information in 2011. This report endorsed the need for a national referral template and produced a template document based on the one the GPIT facilitator group had developed.

The GPIT group launched its template document in February of this year and produced a guidance booklet explaining how to use the template form at the same time. The document is available for download from the ICGP website at www.icgp.ie/referral. Also available on the website are step by step instructions on the use of the form for individual software packages.

GPIT User Groups

The group continued to facilitate user groups for Helix Practice Manager, Health One and Socrates in South Dublin, and Health One, Socrates and GP Mac in Cork. These meetings are a great way for GPs to learn from each other and to feedback suggestions to software developers on ways to improve the software for GPs.

Data Protection Guidelines for GPs

A booklet providing practical advice on a range of data protection issues for GPs was launched at the ICGP Summer School in June of 2011. The guidebook was produced in collaboration with the office of the Data Protection Commissioner and is available for download on the ICGP website at www.icgp.ie/go/in_the_practice/information_technology/data_protection.

The official launch was followed by a series of workshops and presentations at our GPIT road shows, the 2011 ICGP AGM, the 2012 ICGP Spring Meeting and a number of CME group meetings. The guidebook has generated a large amount of requests from ICGP members for individual advice and these are being dealt with on an ongoing basis.

National Electronic Referral Project

This is a key project towards the development of electronic referral letters between GPs and hospitals. It has the potential to radically improve the communication interface between GPs and hospitals and provide significant improvements in waiting times and the quality of care for patients. Dr Jack MacCarthy and Dr Keith Perdue (GPIT facilitators) sit on the advisory group for this project while our regional co-ordinator Dr Frank Hill sits on the implementation group for the project.

The success of the project relies upon the participation of GPs in the pilot project both in the Cork/Kerry region and the catchment area of Tallaght Hospital. Information about the level of IT usage among GPs in the target area was poor at the outset of the project. To bridge this information gap, the facilitator group assisted in the development of a short questionnaire for GPs seeking information about their current practice software and their level of use of this software. In order to engage with the local GPs fully, two more GPIT advisors are to be appointed from the areas in which the pilot project will be taking place. Advertisements for these positions will be appearing shortly in relevant medical publications.

Committee Representation

GPIT facilitators and advisors have represented the College and the GPIT group on a number of national and regional committees over the previous year. These include the following:

| Group | Representatives | Purpose |
|---|--|--|
| National Electronic GP Referral System Pilot Advisor Group | Dr Jack MacCarthy Dr Keith Perdue Dr Brian Meade | Pilot project to establish electronic referrals between GPs and hospitals |
| National Electronic GP Referral System Pilot Project Group | Dr Frank Hill | Project management group for the above project |
| Advisory Group on the Standard for National Sources of Health | Dr Keith Perdue | To develop standards for national health information sources and national data collections |

| | | |
|---|------------------|--|
| Information - HIQA | | |
| Healthlink Governance Group | Dr Donal Buckley | To oversee the activities of Healthlink |
| National Maternity System Group | Dr Donal Buckley | To develop electronic records for maternity patients including shared records between GPs and hospital consultants |
| National HIUG Electronic Diabetes Project | Dr Frank Hill | To improve the care of diabetes patients managed in primary care using Health One |
| National GPIT Management Group | Dr Brian Meade | Steering group for the management of all GPIT projects and policies |
| National Steering Group Medication Management in Older People | Dr Brian Meade | To improve the management of medications in elderly patients especially through the better use of ICT |
| National Immunisations Office Group | Dr Kieran Murphy | To develop immunisation return forms and consent documents for patients attending for immunisations |

Support for GP Mac Users

GP Mac is a GP practice management software package which is used by about 8% of GPs in the country. It did not apply for GPIT certification in 2009 and has not been developed over the past number of years. GPs using this software are concerned that they cannot use it to send electronic cancer referrals and as it remains uncertified, it will not be part of other developments taking place in primary care ICT over the next number of years. At the same time, the product is very user friendly and GPs are unhappy about the prospect of moving to another product.

From a national GPIT point of view, having a large number of active GPs using an uncertified product is a concern. This issue became more apparent recently when it was noticed that around 12% of GPs in the Cork and Kerry region are using GP Mac. These GPs therefore will not be able to participate in the national electronic generic GP referral pilot project in the Cork and Kerry region which poses a threat to the success of this important project.

The GPIT group and its two advisors who use GP Mac have facilitated a number of meetings for users of GP Mac. Two meetings for GP Mac users took place in 2011 in Cork and Tullamore and a national meeting was then arranged for all users in Athlone on 5 March of this year. This meeting was very well attended and a series of presentations from other software providers were made. There was also a discussion on the feasibility of buying the software from the current owner in order to develop it further.

GPIT Website (www.gpit.ie)

The GPIT website has continued to be enhanced during 2011/2012 and now offers GPs a wide choice of advisory leaflets and documents on IT issues of relevance to general practice. In 2011, we developed the "How To" series of information leaflets which provide software specific, step by step instructions on the following tasks:

- How to carry out a practice audit using.....
- How to code a disease and retrieve patients with that disease using...
- How to identify patients for a cervical smear using...
- How to record a procedure using...
- How to use the template referral form using...
- We also published a new information leaflet on the area of practice websites covering pros and cons, costs, content and legal issues. The leaflet is available for download on www.gpit.ie.

FUTURE PLANS

A busy year is in store for the GPIT programme with a number of projects coming to implementation stage during the second half of 2012. The two main projects that facilitators and advisors will be involved in will be the National Electronic Referral Project and a pilot project for GP decision support software. The referral project will involve the recruitment of two new advisors and this process is now at an advanced stage.

There will continue to be a need to promote the advantages of ICT use in general practice and this will occur wherever the opportunity arises at GPIT road shows, ICGP summer schools and faculty meetings, and among user groups.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Excellent administrative support is provided by Ms Niamh Killeen and the Irish College of General Practitioners.

Health in Practice Report

AUTHOR | DR ANDREE ROCHFORT, PROGRAMME DIRECTOR



SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME

The ICGP Health in Practice Programme promotes and supports the goal of health and wellbeing for GPs and their families through a system of integrated services that combine tailored healthcare services with information, advice and health education focusing on the needs of this specific patient group. Healthcare services can be accessed directly by contacting any of the practitioners listed in the Health in Practice directories (www.icgp.ie/hip), or by calling the telephone helpline (087-7519307) to speak to a GP colleague for a discussion on personal or family health needs, or for assistance with colleagues in need of health related interventions.

All HiPP healthcare takes place within a private therapeutic arrangement independent of the College. No personal details are communicated to the ICGP so that the individual's confidentiality and privacy are protected. Services are provided by health professionals who have a special interest, training and experience in doctors' health. HiPP doctors are registered with the Medical Council and practice subject to the professional ethical guidance given by the Medical Council.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PROGRAMME TEAM

Ms Margaret Cunnane – HiPP Administrator.

Mr Dermot Folan, Chief Operations Officer, ICGP.

Four Healthcare Networks (over 100 healthcare professionals – GPs, counsellors, psychologists, psychotherapists, occupational physicians and psychiatrists) as listed on www.icgp.ie/hip.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Healthcare Services

Health in Practice has established its role in the provision of formal confidential healthcare for GPs and their families. Networks are surveyed at intervals to ascertain the level of uptake of services (the numbers and general category of services provided) and category of GP patient (GP, other doctor, doctors' relatives, etc.). No details of gender or age range are requested. Also, as the programme supports doctors attending GPs in areas away from one's own geographical area of practice if necessary for privacy reasons, this adds a further level of anonymity to individual responses. For the year ending December 2011, the network had provided over 1,500 consultations to GPs, other doctors and their families. The consensus feedback from HiPP networks is that with only a few exceptions, those who provide GP services feel the service is being used for all the same reasons that the general population uses GP

services, i.e. for health advice, diagnostics, the screening and treatment of all the normal range of medical conditions. A small number of HiPP GPs felt their doctor patients were more likely than their other patients to present with psychological and mental health issues.

Educational Activities

- The ICGP Diploma Management in Practice.
 - Health in Practice provided interactive workshops and course texts for modules in Practice Health & Safety and Personal Stress Management.
 - St Patrick's University Hospital lecture on 'Complex Consultations in Psychiatry: When the Patient is a Doctor'.
 - The ICGP Summer School 2011, Kilkenny (two interactive sessions).
Session 1: The Balancing Act in General Practice: Expectations, Responsibilities & Resources
Session 2: General Practitioners' Professional & Personal Health & Wellbeing.
 - RCPI Professional Development study day for 4th year SpRs – 'Health & Health Problems in Doctors' where I focused on medical education for the early identification of doctors in difficulty.
 - Specialist training programmes for GP education and discussion with trainees on the South East Training Programme, and with trainers from UCD and Trinity GP training programmes, covering health issues for trainers and trainees.
 - UCD medical students – 'Health & Healthcare for the Medical Professional' to encourage formal healthcare arrangements in young doctors and to assist in developing a positive approach to work/life balance for sustaining doctors in their future medical careers.
 - RCSI Masters Degree in Healthcare Leadership and Management (multidisciplinary health professionals) on the topic of the supervision of juniors and managing junior healthcare professionals with health problems during their training.
 - National Congress of GP Trainees in the Netherlands in January 2012 called LOVAH Congress (attended by 1,000 GP trainees from NL and other countries). I was invited to present 'Doctors are Human Too!' at the conference. This session focused on the importance of doctors knowing their own limits and sharing good examples of managing their health and wellbeing in order to optimise quality of their patient care.
 - Wonca Europe Annual Conference – 'Doctors' Healthcare: Improving the Quality of Healthcare for Doctors by Doctors' was presented at Wonca Conference in Warsaw by Andrée Rochfort (ICGP) and Beata Modlinska, Polish College of GPs (KLRwP), and co-edited by Dr Zlata Ozvacic Adzic, University of Zagreb, Croatia, Professor Bohumil Seifert, Charles University, Czech Republic and Professor Jochen Gensichen, University of Jena, Germany (all members of EQUIP Wonca Europe Network).
 - ICGP Memorial Service, October 2011 – An annual event held by the College dedicated to honour deceased members of the College involved in Health in Practice.
 - The Doctors' Health Seminar was hosted by HiPP as a parallel session during the ICGP Winter Meeting in November 2011 in Athlone. This session was open to all GPs and was well received so
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we hope to hold Doctors' Health seminars in conjunction with College events in the future. I would like to acknowledge the excellent speakers involved including Professor James Lucey, Medical Director, St Patrick's University Hospital and Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Trinity College; Dr Molly Owens, MICGP; Dr Deirdre Kinlen, MICGP; Dr Richard Brennan, MICGP; Dr Blanaid Hayes, Consultant Occupational Physician, Beaumont Hospital and National Director Specialist Training with the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, RCPI. The full programme and proceedings are available on www.icgp.ie/hip.

- European Association for Physician Health (EAPH) Annual Conference Salzburg, September 2011. On behalf of the ICGP, I presented 'Quality Improvement and Safety in Healthcare for Doctors as Patients'.

Publications

Bradley C, Montgomery AJ, Panagopoulou E, Rochfort A. A Review of Self-Medication in Physicians and Medical Students. *Occupational Medicine (Lond)* (2011) 61(7): 490-497.

FUTURE PLANS

European Conference on Doctors' Health 2013

The ICGP will jointly host the next annual Conference of the European Association for Physician Health (EAPH) in 2013 along with the Medical Council who have joined us in the administration of this conference on the theme of 'Keeping Doctors Healthy'. The Association website (www.eaph.eu) has up to date details of the programme and is calling for abstracts. GPs and trainees who have conducted research projects are encouraged to consider submitting abstracts of their work for dissemination at the conference and will feature on the website afterwards.

The Expansion of the HiPP GPs Network for Treating Doctors

In addition to the HiPP GP Network, there are many GPs who have experience in the provision of healthcare to doctors who can also benefit from joining the HiPP network and avail of peer support and CME for doctors' doctors as with other groups of GPs with a common skill or experience. If you wish to participate in the Health in Practice network, which provides GP services for medical colleagues and their families, then contact HiPP administrator Ms Margaret Cunnane at the ICGP for application forms, details of foundation training and ongoing peer support.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

I wish to acknowledge the crucial involvement of the HSE for continuing to support this important service for doctors' health and healthcare in Ireland. The activities include undergraduate and postgraduate doctors from several postgraduate training bodies. Simply attending another doctor for healthcare can be a major challenge for any doctor when it has not been addressed during their training or professional development. Likewise, doctors may feel challenged and uncomfortable when treating a patient who is also a doctor at any phase of the treatment process (e.g. when taking details, performing an examination or procedure, when negotiating a referral, prescribing and following-up).

Network of Establishing GPs Report

AUTHOR | DR MARY GLANCY, PROGRAMME DIRECTOR



SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME

The Network of Establishing GPs (NEGs) was set up by the ICGP in 2004 to address the needs of GPs establishing in practice. The aims were to support, represent and deal with issues arising for these doctors. The project has been a huge success. It is seen as a valuable resource for establishing GPs and it highlights the College's commitment to supporting younger members. It also acts as a conduit for NEGs members to bring issues to the attention of an appropriate committee or to the Council.

The initial phases included needs assessment and developing the programme. Ongoing phases include a continuation of the current level of support for establishing doctors, with a strong need to involve establishing GPs in college life/activities and foster better links between establishing GPs and their senior colleagues.

OTHER MEMBERS OF PROGRAMME

The NEGs Steering Committee for 2011/2012:

- Dr Jason McMahon (Limerick).
- Dr Barry Cosgrove (Northwest).
- Dr Nicholas Fay and Dr Maria O'Mahony (Dublin).
- Dr Ger Hayes and Dr Sheena Finn (Cork).
- Dr Laura Noonan (Midlands).
- Dr Peter Sloane and Dr Shastri Persad (Galway).
- Dr Grainne Ni Fhoghlu (Southwest).

The Steering Committee are involved in the planning, organising and running of the regional meetings, and many also represent establishing GPs on current ICGP committees and ongoing projects.

- Dr Barry Cosgrove – GP clinical lead in palliative care.
- Dr Maria O'Mahony – ICGP Quality in Practice Committee member and project officer for same.

- Dr Ger Hayes – ICGP Research Committee member.
- Dr Sheena Hayes – ICGP Quality in Practice Committee member and ICGP local faculty committee member.
- Dr Grainne Ni Fhoghlu – ICGP Quality in Practice Committee member.

MAIN PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES/TASKS UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

ICGP Winter Meeting 2011

The programme director acted as convenor of the ICGP Winter Meeting 2011. This national event replaced the previous format of the annual NEG's conference. It was decided to run an inclusive meeting for all ICGP members to help improve links between establishing GPs and their senior colleagues. This successful and well attended conference consisted of hour-long workshops in the morning and an afternoon of hot-topic/rapid updates.

NEG's Regional Meetings

- Sept/Oct 2011: 'Reviewing Your Practice Finances'.
- March/April 2012: 'Opening of the GMS – Implications for General Practice and the Establishing GP'.

These meetings were well attended and their successful rollout was made possible with the help of the NEG's Steering Committee.

NEG's Discussion Board on the College Website - Ongoing Moderation and Updates

The NEG's discussion board is the busiest of all the ICGP wide boards. The programme director spends a substantial amount of time moderating the board and contributing as necessary.

In January 2012, the single NEG's discussion board was replaced by two parallel discussion boards, split into 'clinical' and 'non-clinical' topics. This change was requested by users of the forum in order to facilitate the easier grouping of topics and searches within the material. The existing threads were divided between these two boards.

Ms Angela Byrne, Website and Communications Manager, is a co-moderator of the forum in conjunction with the NEG's director.

Leadership in General Practice Course

The first ICGP leadership course commenced in October 2011. This course is a collaborative venture by the College and DCU Business School. The course development and delivery is funded by the ICGP Research and Education Foundation and the Dr John Mason Bursary. This course is designed for general

practitioners who wish to develop their knowledge and skills in the area of leadership. The aim of the Leadership in General Practice course is to foster and develop the future leaders of general practice and the ICGP.

It is obvious that new members are the future leaders of the organisation/profession. Therefore, while not targeted exclusively at establishing GPs per se, the course is a key component for leadership succession.

This programme has been in development for the past number of years, and the exemplary work of the leadership programme management team is acknowledged and commended.

Other Programme Director Activities During the Past 12 Months

- NEGs representative on the ICGP Professional Competence Committee. As this is the first year of mandatory maintenance of professional competence, it has been a very active and busy year for this committee.
- Representing NEGs at council meetings and attending membership services meetings.
- NEGs representative at the meeting with Prospectus in 2011 to review the College's governance arrangement and strategy with the aim to best address the needs of GPs for the next 10 years.
- NEGs welcome pack 2012 – An update to the existing material which is circulated electronically to all 4th year GP trainees when they enter the NEGs programme (assisted by Ms Angela Byrne).
- Presented at the NAGPT meeting, October 2011.
- NEGs representative at the 'Retirement Planning' workshop at the ICGP Winter Meeting, Athlone, November 2011.
- Interviewed by Forum (May 2011) and other medical media publications.
- Chair of the NEGs Steering Committee (members listed above) which has been vital in the organisation and delivery of the NEGs regional meetings. Following on previous recommendations, an agenda is circulated in advance of any teleconference and this has allowed for the smoother running of the meetings.

FUTURE PLANS

It is an uncertain time for general practice in Ireland, and especially for those establishing in practice. The College's NEGs programme provides a sense of security for the establishing GP while promoting collegiality between members. It is seen as a vital benefit of membership for this particular group of ICGP members and should be continued in its current format. It is especially relevant for those who have just completed their specialist training schemes in general practice and for those whose careers are at a crossroads.

Plans for the academic year 2012/2013 and beyond are outlined below:

- Continue to build on the success of the programme to date and improve the structures already in place.
- Update and consolidate the NEGs database in 2012, and set structures in place for reviewing the database on a yearly basis going forward through defining membership numbers and demographics.
- Collate and consolidate the archived and older material from the NEGs discussion board with the aim of creating a FAQ section on the NEGs area of the ICGP website.
- Update and improve the NEGs area of the ICGP website.
- Improve links with retiring GPs through involvement with the Sunsetters' Group as the need arises.
- Update the 'Signposts to Success' handbook (online version).
- Organise/convene the ICGP Winter Meeting 2012.
- Continue the successful format of the NEGs regional meetings.
- Look at ways to develop a GP mentor network. There still exists a strong need for an advisory service for GPs who need help with a variety of non-clinical issues, particularly with regard to establishing in practice. However, remit and boundaries need to be well defined. This would be a large project for any programme to undertake and would likely need significant funding.
- There is also a need for a GP type mediation service (regarding legal partnership dilemmas, etc.) as there is ongoing demand on the ICGP Management in Practice service to provide this at present.
- Continue to foster and encourage participation by younger GPs in College activities. I am scheduled to present to the Mid-Leinster GP Training Schemes (Tullamore and Naas) in May 2012.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

This programme has been very well supported within and by the College to date.

Mr Dermot Folan, COO, has been hugely involved with the programme since its inception, and is the main point of contact within the ICGP for advice and support in all aspects of planning and the co-ordination of NEGs activities and projects.

Ms Orla Sherlock provides the administrative support and is central to the project, being the main contact person for establishing GPs and also central to the co-ordination of NEGs activities. She is assisted by other administrative staff at the ICGP when required.

Ms Angela Byrne, Website and Communications Manager, also contributes greatly to the project, through ongoing moderation and updates to the discussion board and website, as well as providing IT advice.

Special mention must be made to Dr Sinead Murphy, immediate past director of the NEG's programme, for all her support and advice in the past year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider an ICGP wide discussion board to allow for broader discussion between general practitioners with a wide range of experience and access to more opinions from College members, on both clinical and non-clinical matters. However, resource implications regarding finance, IT, legal matters and personnel are potential barriers at this time.
 - Early induction for the incoming NEG's programme director (2013) with a handover period with the outgoing director (a suggested overlap of three months would be an appropriate transition time which is similar to that for the previous change of director in 2011). This transition period is important, as it allows time for the incoming director to understand the workings of the College and the aims of the NEG's programme.
 - Continue to be mindful of costs for establishing GPs. The reduction in the ICGP membership fees for 2012 is acknowledged and welcomed.
-

Education Governance Committee Report

**AUTHOR | DR BRIAN NORTON, EDUCATION GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE CHAIR**

INTRODUCTION

In 14 September 2011, the Education Committee changed its name and new terms of reference were adapted under the chairmanship of Dr Brian Norton. The previous chair, Dr Mary Favier, had been planning the change in name of the committee and terms of reference. The structure, governance and quality assurance aspects of the committee were to be the main focus of the new committee's first meeting.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PROGRAMME

- Anraoi Finnegan – Director of CME.
- Nick Fenlon – Director of Education.
- Margaret O Riordan – Head of Quality and Standards to report on overall activity and on behalf of project directors (Women's Health, Substance Misuse, Alcohol, Mental health, the ICGP Health in Practice (HIP) programme and SCALES).
- Kieran Ryan – Chief Executive Officer.
- Dermot Folan – Chief Operating Officer
- Three nominees from the Council – two faculty representatives and one AUDGPI.

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

The functions of the Education Governance Committee are to report on:

- Oversight, validation and review of existing education programmes.
 - Analysing need and planning for new education programmes and activities.
 - Overseeing assessment where relevant, including the appointment of an external examiner.
 - Providing end-point certification.
 - Decision making in learner grievance/disciplinary proceedings/appeal processes.
 - Collaboration and partnership with external organisations and bodies including academic departments of general practice.
-

- Recommend the Foundation Projects Committee (for their recommendation regarding worthwhile educational programmes).

PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

- Support and encouragement of the work of Nick Fenlon, Director of Education in progressing the application for HETAC accreditation for the ICGP Education Programme. The benefit of being accredited to the government body gives external recognition to the modules and provides employees with tax relief for course costs. It also demonstrates the quality of ICGP courses.
- Great progress was made in the appointment of an external examiner. Dr Anthea Lint has now been appointed.
- The skills, qualifications and attributes required of an external examiner are set by its Education Committee.
- Agreement was reached on the joint hosting by the Medical Council and the ICGP of the forthcoming Europe Association for Physician Health (EAPH) to be held in Dublin in Spring 2013.
- Activities and progress of the following programmes are reviewed and supported by the Education Governance Committee:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Women's Health programme | Mental Health in Primary Care |
| CME – national network of CME | ICGP – Health in Practice (HIP) programme |
| Substance Misuse programme | |

FUTURE PLANS

- The Education Governance Committee is also reviewing the cost of the course and the role of sponsorship by pharmaceutical companies.
- There is increasing demand for education courses from members and the committee is committed to providing more online video education courses to satisfy demand for CPD points.
- The Spring Study Sessions commenced this year and the committee would like to promote this event.
- The Women's Health programme reported great progress in the development of the LARC programme.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

Administrative support is being provided by Kirstin Smith on behalf of the ICGP.

Wonca Europe EQuIP Network Report



**AUTHOR | DR ANDRÉE ROCHFORT, IRISH DELEGATE
EQUIP IS A WONCA EUROPE NETWORK ORGANISATION**

INTRODUCTION

EQuIP is the European association for quality and patient safety in general practice, and is a Wonca Europe network organisation. Wonca is the World Organisation of National Colleges and Academies (of general practice).

All European Countries may send up to two delegates per country to be members of EQuIP. Members must represent their national colleges of general practice, and be clinicians, academic GPs, or researchers in GP. The current Irish delegate is Dr Andrée Rochfort, who attended her first EQuIP meeting in 2007. She was elected honorary secretary of EQuIP in May 2010. Delegates meet twice a year in one of the members' host countries.

SUMMARY OF EQUIP

The aim of EQuIP is to contribute to the achievement of high levels of quality of care and patient safety for patients in general practice in all European countries by providing a structure for collaboration and the exchange of expertise and methodology, and by initiating projects on development and evaluation with regard to quality improvement (QI) and patient safety (PS). Members of EQuIP base their work on QI and PS as being a professional responsibility, a continuous process, an integrated part of medical education, a routine part of daily practice and patient centred, which covers all aspects of patient care, enhances the appropriate use of medical services and resources, and acknowledges the specific strategies of general practice within the medical profession.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

EQuIP working groups evolve and close according to current work activities. EQuIP currently has active working groups in the following areas: Teaching Quality Improvement (QI), Professional Health (PH), Practice Accreditation, and Data Collection in General Practice.

I am active in the Professional Health Working Group and the Teaching Quality Working Group, and will outline some of the outputs of the past 12 months here.

MILESTONES/DELIVERABLES/OUTPUTS

EQuIP Professional Health Working Group:

Aims: To promote quality improvement in doctors' health and healthcare

Activities:

- Wonca Europe, Warsaw, 2011: *Doctors' Healthcare: Improving the Quality of Healthcare Provision for Doctors by Doctors*. (Dr Andrée Rochfort, ICGP & Dr Beata Modlinska, Polish College of General Practitioners.)
- Next workshop at Wonca Europe, Vienna, 2012. *Helping Distressed Doctors* by Dr Andrée Rochfort, ICGP, Dr Zlata University of Zagreb Medical School, Croatia and Professor John Gensichen, University of Jena, Germany.

EQuIP Teaching Quality Improvement Working Group

Aims:

- To promote teaching quality in general practice.
- To deliver European summer schools on quality improvement.

Activities:

- Summer School 2011, Ghent. Delivered by Piet Vanden Bussche.
- Competence based education in QI with the Leonardo da Vinci Project (www.InGPInQI.eu).

Future plans:

- Summer school on quality improvement research, Berlin, 2013, and France, 2013.
- Publishing results of the Teaching Quality Survey in a peer reviewed journal (editing phase).
- Disseminate good QI practices and interesting QI projects on the EQuIP website.

Leonardo da Vinci Project (www.InGPInQI.eu)

EQuIP is one of the partners in the European Commission funded project Lifelong Learning of Quality Improvement by GPs using IT within the Leonardo da Vinci Project for vocational education projects led by the Polish College of General Practice. I am involved in this project through my activities in the EQuIP Teaching Quality Working Group, and have been invited to co-edit a guidebook on teaching quality in general practice, which is currently underway and due for completion by the end of 2012. Further details on the project website are above.

Publications & Presentations

- Analysis of the existing training programmes (educational models) in the field of quality improvement in general practice/family medicine in Europe. Authors: Klemenc-Ketis Z, Rochfort A, Vanden Bussche P. Full report on www.InGPInQI.eu.
- Development of a Competency Framework in Quality Improvement for General Practitioners in Europe. Authors: Czabanowska K, Klemenc-Ketis Z, Potter A, Rochfort A, Csiszar J, Tomasiak T, Vanden Bussche P. Poster presentation at Wonca Europe 2011.

Chronic Condition Patient Self-Management (CCPSM) in General Practice

EQuIP won the Wonca Europe competition for a research proposal for a project to be completed by the 20th anniversary of Wonca Europe in 2015. As EQuIP secretary, I submitted this project bid for the Wonca anniversary fund, which was announced in February 2012 as the successful bid, (www.woncaeurope.org). This research project combines the remit of EQuIP (a Wonca Europe network organisation) in advancing the quality and safety of patient care in European general practice/family medicine (GP/FM), and the prioritisation of patient self-empowerment and the promotion of patients' active involvement in their own healthcare which was adopted as the 12th Characteristic of European General Practice by Wonca Europe in 2011.

It is a proposal to find an effective and efficient way to coordinate education and training for European GPs and practice nurses so that they can empower patients to improve their self-management of chronic conditions in the context of primary care.

There are four partners in collaboration in the research project: EQuIP – The European Association for Quality and Patient Safety in General Practice/Family Medicine; Irish College of General Practitioners, Ireland; Institute of General Practice, University of Jena, Germany; Duodecim, Finnish Medical Society/Duodecim Medical Publications Ltd., Finland.

All are linked through their EQuIP representatives. The work packages will include a literature search, a design of an educational package template and the piloting of the educational module in general practices across Europe. Wonca Europe Executive announced this project as the winner, stating "...all countries will benefit from the results of the project. Good self-management will improve the patient-doctor relationship and the outcome of the provided healthcare. Therefore, it will have a lasting benefit for family medicine." The ICGP is an official partner in this important European project.

I would like to acknowledge the activities of the following key ICGP personnel in the summer project of 2011 which was the basis of this successful research bid: Dr Claire Collins, Director of Research; Dr Margaret O'Riordan, Head of Quality and Standards; Nick Fenlon, Director of Education; and Patricia Patton, Assistant Librarian. The Project Advisory Board will include Associate Professor John Litt from RACGP who participated in the summer project as part of a summer sabbatical with the ICGP in 2011.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

EQuIP currently receives its funding from Wonca Europe.

European Academy of Teachers in General Practice (EURACT) Report

**AUTHOR: DR BRENDAN O'SHEA, COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE &
CHAIRMAN, COMMON EUROPEAN EXAM TASK GROUP AT EURACT**

SUMMARY

EURACT is the European Academy for General Practice Teaching and is established for the purpose of promoting and developing teaching in general practice at all levels, including medical undergraduate (basic medical education or BME), postgraduate teaching (specialty training or ST) and continuing medical education (continuing professional development or CPD).

Historically, it initially stems from the Lievenhorst Group in the 1970s. More recently, it has become closely affiliated with WONCA, being one of three key sub groups which comprise EURACT (Teaching), EQUIPE (Quality in Practice) and EGPRN (Research).

EURACT activities in 2011-2012, as always, have revolved around biannual Council meetings, where national representatives from 37 member states meet to work on committees and task groups over a two day conference. Council meetings this year were in Faro and Jerusalem.

The main activities this year relate to a substantial upgrade to the EURACT website, to include the posting of a larger volume of material suitable and relevant to general practice teaching. Included in this is the facility for EURACT members to post good examples of work carried out by students and GP trainees which are felt to be of sufficient quality for use as a learning resource, and as examples of good audit, research or learning material.

Cognisant of the financial uncertainty evident throughout many health care systems, EURACT Chairman Dr Janko Kersnik issued a press statement following the autumn council meeting, making pointed reference to the cost efficacy universally understood to be a feature of well-developed primary care.

The Specialty Training Committee conducted a study on GP trainers throughout the EU zone. This study included descriptive data on what criteria are used to select GP trainers, how the criteria are applied, and what educational standards must be demonstrated and maintained by prospective trainers. There was clearly wide variation evident throughout the EU area, but it was encouraging to note that cumulative numbers of GP trainers throughout Europe are in excess of 32,000. This is surely a force to be reckoned with, especially if speaking with one voice on key issues.

Activities planned for 2012-2013 include a feasibility study on the establishment of a common European specialty examination, together with a descriptive study on the general practice element in undergraduate curricula throughout European universities and medical schools (Professor Francesco Carrelli, Milan).

WONCA provides a good clearing house to compare models of teaching at all levels throughout Europe. It also facilitates the dissemination of best models and supports a useful network of GP teachers. In addition to 37 national representatives, it now also includes over 800 members and is growing. If you have an interest in teaching in general practice, see the EURACT website.

ICGP Nominee to Medical Council Report

AUTHOR | DR RICHARD BRENNAN



SUMMARY OF PROJECT/PROGRAMME

The Medical Council regulates medical doctors in the Republic of Ireland.

Its responsibilities include:

- Maintaining the register of medical practitioners.
- Ensuring the highest standards of medical training and education.
- Promoting good medical practice and overseeing doctors' continuing professional development.
- Investigating complaints against doctors.

As ICGP nominee to the council, I attend the council meetings of which there were 14 last year (eight scheduled and six extraordinary meetings). I am a member of the Standards in Practice Committee, the Professional Competence Committee and the Fitness to Practice Committee, and chair of the Health Sub Committee. In addition to the complex committee work, there is voluminous preparatory documentation for all of these committees.

During the past year, the headline issues have been the introduction of professional competence assurance, the development of professional competence assessment procedures and structures, and the establishment of the new supervised division of the register.

As the scale of work for the Council is so extensive, I am grateful to other College members who sit on many other committees to assist with the council's statutory functions.

In addition, during the year, I have been honoured to give presentations and participate at a number of meetings with both a College and Medical Council interest, including:

- Waterford faculty CME group meetings.
 - Carlow/Kilkenny Faculties Annual Study Day.
-

- The IMO AGM debate on medical regulation.
- The European Association of Physician Health (EAPH) meeting in Salzburg.
- The Health in Practice Programme (HIPPP) session at the ICGP Winter Meeting in Athlone.
- The Sick Doctor Scheme Conference in Dublin.

Further information regarding the work of the Medical Council can be found at www.medicalcouncil.ie.

UEMO Report

AUTHOR | DR LYNDA HAMILTON, IRISH REPRESENTATIVE

ICGP REPRESENTATION TO UEMO

- Anraoi Finnegan/Lynda Hamilton.
- In conjunction with IMO Representation.
- UEMO is a pan-European organisation of GPs/FM.

SPRING MEETING: BUDAPEST, 2-4 JUNE 2011 (HUNGARIAN NEW PRESIDENCY)

- To reorganise working groups to have self-limits and purpose.
- To have a rapid response team.
- To work electronically.

AUTUMN MEETING: TURIN, 10-12 NOVEMBER 2011

1. Consultation on modernising the Professional Qualification Directive for January 2013:

- European professional card (electronic certificate).
- Better access to information on the recognition of professional qualifications.
- Update minimum standards for health workers.
- International alert for disciplined professionals.

2. UEMO joins the SMART project, which will measure the extent to which GP/FM use ICT in their daily activities.

3. Consultation on cross-border prescribing:

- Authenticity of prescription, generic, printed.
- Product substitution standards.
- Unique patient identifier (social security number).
- Unique doctor identifier.

4. Discussion on task shifting (rapporteur: Lynda Hamilton):

- Method of payment incentives.
- Scope of practice of each medical professional. Who can work independently?
- Clarity on responsibility.
- GP as team leader.

Education Unit Report

AUTHOR | NICK FENLON, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



OTHER MEMBERS OF ELEARNING, COURSES, SUMMER SCHOOL

- Louise Nolan, eLearning Unit Administrator (full time).
- Caitriona Finn, eLearning Unit Administrator (registration and assessment).
- Maureen Dempsey, eLearning Unit Administrator (collaborative courses and course evaluation).
- Margaret Cunnane, Administrator, Diploma in Management in Practice course.
- Gillian Doran & Patricia Patton, ICGP Librarians (available to elearning and course participants on request).
- Angela Byrne, Website & Communications Manager (available to elearning and course participants on request).
- Niamh Killeen, Administrator for Minor Surgery Course.
- Dr Aisling Lavelle, co-ordination of the ICGP application for HETAC accreditation.

For the academic year 2011-2012, the college facilitated 16 different educational courses of study. This involves many course tutors and assessors. We delivered courses in collaboration with the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and the Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine, and have been academically supported by UCC for our Therapeutics course.

SUMMARY OF UNIT PROGRAMME

Aims of Education Programme

The aim of the Education Programme is to provide continuous medical education/professional development to its members.

The objective of the programme is to provide general practitioners and health care professionals with practical updates on identified topics that are relevant and applicable to their everyday practice. It strives to provide these in a format that recognises the reality of the busy, stressful and complex work of GPs, and through the use of educational methodologies that match the learning styles of members.

The education project is responsible for both developing and delivering relevant and up to date courses to ICGP members. In recent years, we have also offered some courses to practice nurses and other health care professionals. Some courses are delivered in an elearning environment through a combination of learned modules, interactive workshops, online discussion forums and participation in audits, and reflect all the major, current and debatable health issues in general practice.

In addition to the elearning courses, the need for short direct face to face courses was identified. In response to this, we have developed and delivered the very successful ICGP Summer School where members have the option to meet for a three day series of educational sessions as well as social interaction. So far, the College has hosted five highly successful summer schools and will be hosting its sixth from 21 June to 23 June 2012.

For the first time, we also facilitated an educational event called the ICGP Spring Sessions. This was designed to cater for those who were unable to attend the Summer School and/or Winter Meeting (the content consisted of sessions first presented at these two events), and for those who needed to record external professional competence credits before the end of April.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES/TASKS OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

In 2011/12, we delivered the following elearning courses:

- Diploma in Therapeutics.
- Diploma in Women's Health.
- Certificate in Palliative Care.
- Certificate in Diabetes Care.
- Theory Course for Cervical Smear takers.
- Occupational Medicine – leading to LFOM (in collaboration with the Faculty of Occupational Medicine).
- Certificate in Management in Practice.
- Certificate in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.
- Musculoskeletal Examination and Injury Management (in collaboration with the Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine).

In addition, and under the direction of other college directors, the College delivered many other courses including:

- Family Planning Theory & Practical.
 - SCALES Course.
 - Managing Alcohol Problems.
-

- Substance Misuse.
- Minor Surgery.

SUMMARY OF THE COLLEGE EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2010 - 2011

| Course/Educational Event | Number Attending |
|---|------------------|
| Diploma in Therapeutics | 7 |
| Certificate in Palliative Care | 19 |
| Diploma in Women's Health | 8 |
| Diploma Practice in Management | 24 |
| Certificate in Diabetes Care | 21 |
| Musculoskeletal Examination and Injury Management | 19 |
| Occupational Medicine Year 1 & 2 | 28 |
| Course for Cervical Smear Takers | 21 |
| Minor Surgery | 35 |
| CBT | 11 |
| SCALES | 20 |

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Management in Practice | 24 |
| ICGP Summer School | 350 |

NEW DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

During the past 12 months, we have been engaged in the development and delivery of stand-alone e-learning modules. The first such module was on Smoking Cessation. This module was launched in October 2011 and over the course of the first six months, over 450 GPs participated in the programme.

- We will be launching three new elearning modules before the annual AGM in May: LARC (Long Acting Reversible Contraception).
- Breast Problems.
- Information Skills.

We have a number of elearning modules in various stages of production and these include:

- COPD.
- Hypertension.
- Asthma.
- Pain.
- Alcohol Awareness.
- Suicide Prevention.
- Physical Activity.

All of these will be launched over the coming months.

A new course called Leadership for General Practice was launched in October 2011 under the direction of Mr Dermot Folan.

EDUCATION TIMETABLE

The elearning unit has been operating since 1999. It is continuously developing and has been expanding annually. Our elearning courses all start in October and end in May.

The ICGP Summer School is a three day event which takes place during the last week of June. Participants have the option to partake in as many or as few sessions as suit their needs.

The summer months are used to evaluate courses which have finished, collate course results and prepare the next year of courses by bringing all programmes up to date, launching new courses, etc.

PROGRAMME MILESTONES, DELIVERABLES & OUTPUTS

Unit Milestones

- The fifth ICGP Summer School took place in June 2011 with over 300 GPs in attendance.
- A new education extern – Professor Anthea Lints, Edinburgh University – was appointed to the ICGP Education Programme.
- A total of 30 individuals graduated with a Masters in Medical Education from the ICGP/QUB collaborative course in Medical Education.
- A number of new ICGP e-learning modules were launched.

Statement of Achievements/Outcomes 2011

During the academic year 2011-2012, the third collaborative course in Musculoskeletal Examination and Injury Management took place. There were 19 participants on this third course which was delivered by both workshop and e-learning. We have received very positive feedback from participants.

We also delivered the fourth course in occupational medicine in collaboration with the Faculty of Occupational Medicine leading to LFOM. We had a 100% pass rate of candidates sitting the LFOM exam in 2011.

We ran a number of highly successful Minor Surgery courses which took place in Dublin and Cork.

HETAC carried out a validation visit on the College with a particular focus on our quality assurance manual and operations. This was a very positive meeting and the College awaits the official report before advancing to the next level of the accreditation process.

Over 450 members participated on the Smoking Cessation e-learning module in the first six months.

We have now completed the formal collaboration for the delivery of the ICGP/QUB Masters in Medical Education. Thirty course participants completed their thesis work and graduated from Queen's University Belfast with the award of a Masters in Medical Education. We are grateful to Queen's University Belfast for their support and enthusiasm during our collaboration.

FUTURE PLANS

We will be facilitating the sixth ICGP Summer School from 21 June to 23 June 2012 at the Lyrath Estate Hotel, Kilkenny. This is the third time we will be running the Summer School to include a Saturday. Building on the success of the last five years, this venture will consist of a broad range of short presentations with

something to suit everyone. The Summer School will include topics from therapeutics, practice management, legal and ethical issues, mental health, chronic disease, women's health, cancer care, etc.

The Summer School 2012 will also facilitate three parallel conferences:

- Mental Health.
- Master Classes in Contraception.
- Research.

Other new ventures:

- We are awaiting the formal report from HETAC so that we can put further procedures in place and progress towards official accreditation.
- We will be delivering the Minor Surgery course at three/four locations outside Dublin in 2012.
- In recognition of the requirement for professional competence credits from May 2011 onwards, we will be delivering alternative modes of study on some college courses. This will be in the form of delivering stand alone topics from identified courses so that members can chose topics that best suit their needs and study in a less pressured way. It will also give recognition to the financial constraints currently being experienced.
- These topics will be recognised for professional competence credits.
- We are facilitating the first ICGP Spring Sessions at the IMI conference centre in April 2012. The aim of this event is to support those who still need to record professional competence credits before the end of April. The Spring Sessions will be composed of sessions previously delivered at the ICGP Summer School and Winter meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

The Education Programme has one full time administrator, Louise Nolan, and one part time administrator, Caitriona Finn (registration and assessment). Louise Nolan is also the administrator for the ICGP Summer School. Niamh Killeen is the administrator for the Minor Surgery course. Margaret Cunnane is the administrator for the Practice in Management courses. All administrators have given hugely to the development and continued success of ICGP education delivery.

FUNDING SOURCE(S)

There is a charge for all courses, and so the unit strives to be self funding. We have also been able to avail of 'start up' sponsorship for new courses in the past. The ICGP Foundation has also contributed funding in the past.

Women's Health Programme Report

**AUTHOR | DR MIRIAM DALY, PROGRAMME
DIRECTOR**



PROGRAMME MEMBERS

- Programme Director: Dr Miriam Daly.
- Project Director, LARC Course: Dr Geraldine Holland.
- Tutor, Family Planning Certificate Courses: Dr Deirdre Lundy.
- Administrator: Kirstin Smith (replacing Yvette Dalton on maternity leave).

SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAMME

The Women's Health Programme aims to provide educational support for primary care in women's healthcare and to contribute to the College's policy development in this area. Since its inception in 1998, the programme has evolved to cover a wide range of topics, using a variety of educational formats and has produced a series of publications using a multi-disciplinary approach.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES/TASKS

- Award the Basic and Advanced Certificate in Contraception/RSH committee.
 - Run courses in women's health topics and develop new courses in response to members' needs.
 - Provide training and certification in long acting reversible contraceptives (LARC).
 - Facilitate workshops in women's health at ICGP events throughout the year.
 - Provide opinion and a review of documents and guidelines produced by outside bodies.
 - Represent the ICGP on steering committees and policy groups relating to women's health.
 - Reply to clinical queries from members on women's health issues.
 - Represent the ICGP as appropriate.
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PROGRAMME MILESTONES/DELIVERABLES/OUTPUTS

LARC Training and Certification

- **LARC Phase I:** We have invited GPs who are experienced in insertions of intrauterine contraceptive devices (IUDs) and/or subdermal implants to apply for the Advanced Certificate in Contraception by completing an online application form and a LARC clinical update, and submitting a log of insertions. We are in the process of reviewing the applications and will be awarding certificates. We received funding for this phase from Bayer and MSD (€60,000).
- **LARC Phase II:** We are recruiting and training new LARC tutors. This phase has been funded by Crisis Pregnancy Programme, HSE (€27,000). We ran a LARC tutor training course in February 2012 and will be running a further course in May 2012.
- **LARC Phase III:** In this phase, we will be providing training and certification for GP trainees in LARC methods. We are in the process of planning and costing this phase.
- **LARC Phase IV:** We plan to provide training and certification for GPs in practice. We will be planning this phase later in 2012.

Publications

- **Domestic Violence:** We have begun to review and update the ICGP document, Domestic Violence: A guide for General Practitioners. Funding received from COSC, Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. (€9,500). Steering Committee includes HSE, NGOs.
- **Management of Crisis Pregnancy:** We have begun to review and update the ICGP document, Primary Care Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Crisis Pregnancy. We received funding from the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme (€11,000).
- **Guidelines for Post Natal Care in General Practice:** This project is in the very early stages.
- We are running a Women's Health series in Forum journal.

eLearning Courses

- **LARC eLearning Course:** We have developed a LARC elearning resource for those applying for the Advanced Certificate in Contraception. This was launched in April 2012.
 - **Breast Disease:** We are developing an e-learning module on breast disease in conjunction with the NCCP. This is funded by Pfizer. We hope to launch this in May 2012.
 - **Sexually Transmitted Infections:** We are planning and costing the development of an STI elearning course for primary care. We plan to seek funding to develop this.
 - **Diploma in Women's Health:** This course has traditionally been run by the e-learning programme and was separate from the Women's Health Programme. We have been asked to review some
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modules on this course in 2011/2012 and will be actively involved in planning and running this course for the next academic year, in conjunction with the elearning programme.

- **Reproductive and Sexual Health (RSH) Committee:** The RSH committee meets four times per year and advises on training in sexual and reproductive health. They award the Certificate in Contraception and the Advanced Certificate in Contraception.

Representation

- HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, National Strategy to address the issue of crisis pregnancy. Strategy Steering Group. Ended 2011.
- Royal College of Physicians in Ireland (RCPI) Policy Group on Sexual Health.
- Group developing Family Risk Breast Cancer, Guidelines for General Practice set up by the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP).
- HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme Advisory Group.

Research

- We have received ethical approval to do a study entitled Intrauterine Contraceptive Device and Contraceptive Implant: Audit of Insertions and Follow Up in General Practice. We plan to collect information from general practices about insertions of IUDs and implants.

Clinical Queries

- We responded to clinical queries from members about women's health issues.

Courses

- **Reproductive and Sexual Health Course:** This newly named course provides an update for GPs and practice nurses on contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, menopause and women's health. We run two per year. It fulfils the requirements for the theory part of the Certificate in Contraception. For the first time this year, we accepted sponsorship for this course.
 - **Certificate in Contraception practical course:** Two per year.
 - **Masterclass in Contraception:** To train new tutors in contraception. Two per year.
 - **Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC) Tutor Course:** To train new LARC tutors. Two per year.
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Women's Health Courses: February 2011-February 2012

| Course | Date | Number Attending |
|---|----------------------|------------------|
| Reproductive and Sexual Health Course | 8-9 September 2011 | 43 |
| | 19-20 January 2012 | 49 |
| Certificate in Contraception Practical Course | 17-18 February, 2011 | 8 |
| | 10-11 March, 2011 | 16 |
| | 20-21 October 2011 | 19 |
| | 17-18 November 2011 | 12 |
| LARC Tutor Workshop | 9th February 2012 | 40 |
| Masterclass in Contraception for Contraception Tutors | 24 June 2011 | 95 |

Women's Health Workshops

- Update in Contraception, workshop for the ICGP Summer School, Kilkenny, 24 June 2011.
- Update in Contraception, workshop at ICGP AGM, Galway, 7 May 2011.
- Advanced Certificate in Contraception launch, ICGP Winter Meeting, 26 November 2011.
- Women's Health Lectures at ICGP SCALES Course.
- Menopause Update at Diploma in Women's Health Workshop, 28 Jan 2011.
- LARC Update at CME Tutor Conference, 4 February 2012.

FUTURE PLANS

- Acquire funding for and deliver phases 3-4 of the LARC programme.
 - Acquire funding and deliver a sexually transmitted infections elearning course.
 - Plan and deliver the Diploma in Women's Health course.
 - Review and update the ICGP QIP publication, Cardiovascular Disease in Women.
 - Run reproductive and sexual health updates for those who wish to re-certify for the Basic and Advanced Certificate in Contraception.
 - Incorporate more elearning modules into our courses.
 - Include podcasts of our lectures on our elearning courses.
 - Make further improvements to our website page and increase GP usage of the page.
 - Women's Health news bulletin.
 - Set up and facilitate a web based Sexual and Reproductive Health discussion forum for GPs.
-

Disease Surveillance Sentinel Practice Network Project Report

AUTHOR | DR MICHAEL JOYCE, PROJECT DIRECTOR

OTHER MEMBERS OF PROJECT

I run the project on behalf of the ICGP in collaboration with the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and the National Virus Reference Laboratory. The Health One User Group (HIUG) provides valuable technical support. Valuable assistance is provided by my practice nurse, Ms Olga Levis.

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

The project involves running a computerised surveillance network for certain infectious diseases in the community and involves 58 sentinel practices spread throughout the country. There is a particular emphasis on the surveillance of influenza.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

There is a need to monitor certain infectious diseases in the community, especially influenza.

To address this need, this project was set up in 2001. The aim was to recruit practices that had a high level of recording computerised information in their practices already. This meant that when a GP saw a case with one of the index conditions, he/she was recording it anyway and there was no need for any extra work on behalf of the GP to have the case recorded. At the end of the week, a computerised search, which can be delegated to a staff member, is then run and the result is sent to the ICGP. The data is cleaned and forwarded to the HPSC.

The process was successful from the outset with very good return rates being achieved immediately and all the stake holders were very pleased. Initially, there were 20 practices involved, all using Health One software and the conditions covered were influenza, chicken pox and shingles. Health One was chosen because of its suitability for this type of project. Now there are 60 practices involved including some practices using software other than Health One. Measles, mumps and rubella, and gastro-enteritis have been added to the conditions that are covered.

Although I have been involved in the project since its inception through my practice as one of the sentinel practices and also through HIUG, I took over the ICGP role formally from Dr Dermot Nolan in September 2004.

EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROJECT

- Illustrates the use and application of computerised practice.
- Demonstrates the power of data available and collected in general practice.

BENEFITS TO MEMBERS OF THE PROJECT

There is a wealth of data out there in general practice which will be sought after in increasing amount as time goes by. It is absolutely critical that general practice and the members of the ICGP remain in control of this data so that it is used for the general good and not used inappropriately. This project provides a method for control and the distribution of GP generated computerised data that can be built on in the future in different areas. The lessons learned have already contributed to the developments in Heartwatch and the Independent National Data Centre (INDC), and will continue to do so in the future.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Collection of incidence data for influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox, shingles and gastro-enteritis in the community.
- Cleaning and preparation of data.
- Forwarding of this data on behalf of the ICGP to the HPSC.
- Taking swabs from suspected cases of influenza to confirm cases and determine what type of influenza virus is in circulation.

The results of the surveillance are available on the HPSC website at

<http://www.hpsc.ie/hpsc/A-Z/Respiratory/Influenza/SeasonalInfluenza/Surveillance/InfluenzaSurveillanceReports/20112012Season/>

At the time of writing (28/3/12), it looks like the influenza activity has peaked at a very low level for this year, giving us a quiet influenza year for the first time in a few years.

Although not technically a part of this ICGP project, a significant number of the network participants have volunteered to take part in a pan European study of influenza vaccine effectiveness in conjunction with the HPSC which was first carried out in the 2009/2010 season and has continued since. A paper on this was published in the IMJ, volume 105 no. 2, Feb 2012, pgs 39-42.

PROJECT MILESTONES/DELIVERABLES/OUTPUTS

- Whereas previously surveillance was carried out from week 40 to week 20, it now takes place throughout the entire year.
- With 58 participating practices, we now have the desired 5% population coverage. No further recruitment is currently planned.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

The project has achieved its goals of community surveillance of the specified conditions. The project needs to continue as it has become a cornerstone of surveillance particularly with regard to seasonal and pandemic influenza. Return rates well in excess of 90% continue to be achieved consistently.

Last year, on a trial basis, a new innovation of the publication on the internet of anonymous performance data was carried out. Each practice knows their site number but this is not known to anyone else. Therefore, we can show graphs of performance and practices can inspect this to see how they are comparing with other practices. This and other relevant information can be viewed at <http://www.hiug.ie/DISEASE%20SURVEILLANCE/Disease%20surveillance.htm>.

Feedback on this facility has been very positive and we plan to continue it.

FUTURE PLANS

Continued surveillance is planned.

FUNDING SOURCE

Funding is provided on an agreed annual budget basis by the HPSC.

Substance Misuse Report

**AUTHOR | DR IDE DELARGY, PROGRAMME
DIRECTOR**



OTHER MEMBERS OF PROGRAMME TEAM

Administrator: Niamh Killeen.

Clinical Audit Facilitator: Mary Fanning.

AUDIT REVIEW GROUP (ARG)

The terms of reference for this group were reviewed. The updated terms of reference are available on the Substance Misuse section of the ICGP website. The membership of the ARG was also reviewed and relevant changes were made to the membership due to resignations and the completion of the term. This group meets regularly to review audits and to progress recommendations for training for GPs on the Methadone Treatment Protocol.

AUDIT

- Mary Fanning was appointed clinical audit facilitator in September 2011. Twenty one external audits were carried out between October 2011 and the end of March 2012. These audits have been presented to the Audit Review Group for review and decisions are made on the basis of the findings of each individual audit.
 - Following piloting and testing, a self-audit tool has been finalised. It has been forwarded to a number of GPs who have completed an external audit with no issues identified. External audits will continue to be available to GPs :
 - Who have not been audited for five years
 - Who are new to auditing
 - Moving from Level 1 to Level 2 status
 - Who had an unsatisfactory audit
 - The SMP website was updated and the audit process was clarified further. The helpful patient management tools which support the audit process were also updated. The team devised a sample benzodiazepine audit in conjunction with Dr Claire Collins. This sample audit is now available online to all members.
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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

National Opiate Guidelines Committee

A committee was set up in 2011 to review and update the guidelines for the treatment of opiate users in primary care. The committee is composed of representatives from the ICGP, the HSE, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and the Irish College of Psychiatry. Dr Des Crowley and Dr Kieran Harkin* are the ICGP representatives on the committee who are reporting back to Dr Delargy on a regular basis. The committee hopes to finalise the work by June 2012.

* As of February 2012, Dr Harkin has stepped down as the ICGP representative and Dr Delargy has joined the committee as a permanent member.

Training and Mentorship

- A full day conference on substance misuse was organised to coincide with the annual ICGP Winter Meeting. This was very well attended with presentations by international speakers.
- Six doctors are currently being mentored for Level 2 training.
- In excess of 1,100 GPs have completed the online Level 1 training course to date.
- Nurse Training Day was organised for nurses involved in substance misuse treatment in November 2011 (An Bord Altranais approved) and was well attended.
- A support seminar for GP registrars in RCSI was facilitated in March 2012.
- A clinical audit facilitator presented at the substance misuse training at the Centre of Nurse Education, St Ita's, Portrane.
- A training needs analysis was carried out for nurses working in the area of substance misuse. This will indicate what training is to be provided in the future.

WORK PLAN FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2012

- To provide further training for nurses working in the area of substance misuse including training in clinical audits (An Bord Altranais approved).
 - To provide GP co-ordinator mentorship through TeleLink to GPs working towards Level 2 status.
 - To develop other relevant audit tools to meet IMC requirements.
 - To update the IT system to report on external and self-audit activity.
 - An independent review of the audit process (to be carried out by auditors from Scotland involved there in the Methadone Treatment Protocol).
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Mental Health in Primary Care Report

AUTHOR | PEARSE FINEGAN, PROJECT DIRECTOR



INTRODUCTION

The last year has been a positive one for the development of the mental health project at the ICGP and mental health services in primary care. Despite budgetary constraints, mental health was the only healthcare area to receive increased funding of €35 million in the 2011 budget. The ICGP has campaigned for many years for access to counselling and psychotherapy for GMS patients in the primary care setting and the €6 million designated for this service in 2012 is a very welcome development. The majority of the remaining extra funding has been assigned to the Clinical Care Programme for Mental Health.

MENTAL HEALTH CLINICAL CARE PROGRAMME

Dr Brid Hollywood was appointed GP clinical lead for the Mental Health Clinical Care Programme in October 2011. The Clinical Care Programme had been in existence without GP input for a year prior to this. An initial document produced by the programme largely addressed secondary care needs with very little reference to the vast amount of service delivery in primary care and general practice. A strong input from Dr Hollywood has redressed the balance and ensured that primary care is included in future plans. The programme plan seeks to reconfigure core service structures and mental health care delivery models. It does not seek to comprehensively address all aspects of mental health care. Instead, it identifies the critical clinical programme developments that will ensure a modern, high quality national mental health service. The three areas that are being addressed this year reflect the initial focus on secondary care as follows:

- Early intervention in psychosis.
- Early intervention in eating disorders.
- Management of self-harm presentations in emergency departments.

Plans for next year will have a stronger primary care focus where areas such as depression and anxiety will be prioritised.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

National Office for Suicide Prevention

The ICGP has secured funding from the National Office for Suicide Prevention to design and deliver a course in suicide prevention for general practitioners, practice staff and primary care teams. The aim of the course is to deliver an evidence based education programme with a focus on competence development in knowledge, skills and attitudes in the area of suicide prevention. Course content will be developed following an initial needs assessment of key stakeholders. A blended learning approach to course delivery will consist of:

- A short workshop.
- Home study modules by elearning.
- Online discussions including case discussion.
- Implementation into practice activities.
- Access to online resources and services information.

Substance Misuse Detoxification Programme

Funding has been secured from the HSE to develop a protocol and evaluate current services in relation to substance misuse detoxification with a view to producing recommendations for potential improvements in this area. Dr Ide Delargy, Dr Brid Hollywood and I will develop this project.

TEAM BASED APPROACHES TO MENTAL HEALTH IN PRIMARY CARE (PROGRAMME DELIVERED AT DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY 2009/2012)

In February 2012, there was an intake of 30 students out of 245 applications from primary care staff for the Team Based Approaches to Mental Health in Primary Care programme at DCU. The programme was evaluated in June 2011 and feedback from participants was very positive. The government policy 'A Vision for Change' (DOH & Children 2006) provides a comprehensive blueprint for the development of responsive and dynamic mental health services for all. This policy document emphasises the role primary care can have in addressing the mental health care needs of the local population. The course content seeks to address educational needs associated with preparing primary care practitioners to address the health and welfare of people with mental health care needs in primary healthcare settings.

Advancing Collaborative Work Between Primary Care and Specialist Mental Health Services

A HSE group has been established to advance collaborative work between primary care and specialist mental health services. This primary care and mental health group was established as a subgroup of the 'A Vision for Change' National Working Group 2010. The group was tasked with looking at the recommendations laid out in Chapter 7 (Mental Health in Primary Care) of 'A Vision for Change' (2006)

and developing a guidance document to advise on the integration of the primary care and mental health services, and to support collaborative work between specialist mental health and primary care services. As a member of this group, I have contributed to the first draft of the guidance document which should be available shortly for review by the ICGP.

Dementia

Care of patients with dementia can be challenging for all health care workers including GPs. I am currently working with Professor Greg Swanwick and the ICGP Quality in Practice Committee to develop a quick reference guide on dementia care.

GP Exercise Referral Programme

Physical activity plays a major role in maintaining good mental health. The Mental Health Project has worked with the GP Exercise Referral Programme and is currently piloting the use of exercise as part of the care plan for patients with mental health difficulties. A method of subvention to support GMS patients in availing of this programme is currently being explored.

Development of an Electronic Discharge Letter

Work on the development of an electronic discharge letter from mental health services to general practice is underway in the Galway region.

Presentation at the ICGP Winter Meeting

An update on the Mental Health Project activities was delivered at the ICGP Winter Meeting.

Further Initiatives That I Also Support

- Working with Mental Health in Primary Care within the HSE.
 - Advising the voluntary sector – Pieta House, SOS.
 - Education on mental health issues in primary care.
 - Part of the 'See Change' programme on the stigma of mental health.
 - Amnesty International on mental health issues.
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ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

Michelle Dodd.

CONCLUSION

The last year has seen many exciting developments in the area of mental health in general practice and primary care. The challenge now is to build on these initiatives in the coming year.

SCALES Course Report

AUTHOR | DR MARIA WILSON, COURSE TUTOR

ADMINISTRATOR

Yvette Dalton.

SUMMARY

The GP Refresher Course (SCALES) has been in operation for the past number of years. It is primarily aimed at doctors who have been out of general practice for a period of time and are thinking of re-entering it but wish to update their knowledge. It also attracts doctors who have never been in general practice but are considering a future in it. Interestingly, a third group has emerged of doctors who are involved in public health. This group of doctors do the course to update their medical knowledge as they feel quite distant from some clinical scenarios. As a result, there is a wide range of expertise and opinions expressed in the group.

During the summer of 2011, we interviewed prospective participants by phone having received their needs assessments. The sole purpose of this is to inform participants of the course content. The course runs as follows:

- There is a limit of 20 participants; 16 people took part in 2011.
 - A needs assessment is sent to each interested person and followed up by phone interview.
 - It is run over eight full days; all except one of these are held at the ICGP. Lunch is provided and a lot of discussion spills over into this time.
 - The course tutor runs half of each of the full day and guest speakers, largely chosen from expertise within general practice, cover the second part of the day.
 - Most of the course material is given to participants either before or on the day the course begins. Participants are encouraged to read in advance as all the sessions are interactive.
 - The curriculum has a core basis. However, we always leave free sessions to accommodate specific interests or needs of the group. We have several past participants who come back and run a session on the course. These have included Dr Shunil Roy (suturing techniques) and Dr Elizabeth Healy (child protection issues - a practical approach). Other guest lecturers include: Dr Geraldine Holland, Dr Deirdre Lundy, Dr Susan Smith, Dr David Buckley, Dr Darragh O' Doherty, Dr Zita O' Reilly, Dr Conor Maguire, Dr Keith Perdue, Mr Rolande Anderson, Dr Fiona Magee and Dr Aisling O Gorman.
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The course started on 30 August 2011 and finished on 8 December 2011 with a graduation and a festive lunch. We had a very enthusiastic group of doctors who were very motivated and came well prepared for the sessions. We had a very high attendance rate.

Course tutor: Dr Maria F Wilson.

Course administrator: Ms Yvette Dalton and Ms Kirstin Smith.

College Website Report

AUTHOR | ANGELA BYRNE, WEB & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

INTRODUCTION

The College website project is responsible for the development and management of the ICGP website (www.icgp.ie) in line with the strategic direction of the College. The project aims to create a comprehensive content resource enabling the dissemination of information to members and the wider audience. The College website also enables members to make communication and interaction with the College more convenient and efficient, and markets and promotes College activities.

Other Members of the Project

Ionic, the College's web development company, and Sandra Rooney, SMR Consulting, who provides consulting and project management of web projects requiring integration with the College's membership database.

In November 2011, the College appointed a new website editor Ms Laura Smyth. This appointment was necessary to cope with the added work required due to the advent of professional competence. Laura's main remit is the daily update of the website with news and events as well as editorial quality control of all material produced by the College.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Daily update of the website to keep information up to date and relevant.
 - Technical support for ICGP members and users of the website.
 - Project management of web developments and liaison with Ionic Ltd and SMR Consulting.
 - Formatting of publications for the website.
 - Liaison with various College groups (administrators, project directors, committees, etc), management of each group's section and communication regarding website developments and tools.
 - Creation of an online repository of documents so that all staff can locate the most recent version of all documents quickly and easily.
 - Online marketing and promotion of College events and conferences.
 - Presentation of College material in an online, user friendly manner.
 - Keeping up to date with IT developments and advising College of same.
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WEBSITE STATISTICS | OVERVIEW

In 2011-2012, website traffic increased by over 60%. The busiest month was January 2012. This is due to the GP training intake and MICGP examination online applications. A page view refers to the number of individual pages visited during a month; Unique Visitors counts the number of times individual users access the website while Visits records the number of visits that those users made.

| | May 2011 | June 2011 | July 2011 | Aug 2011 | Sep 2011 | Oct 2011 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Page Views | 274,522 (+ 35,427 ePortfolio) | 245,107 (+ 29,687 ePortfolio) | 203,975 (+ 21,835 ePortfolio) | 200,180 (+ 26,358 ePortfolio) | 243,541 (+ 55,059 ePortfolio) | 258,229 (+ 66,395 ePortfolio) |
| Visits | 43,372 | 41,687 | 35,429 | 35,701 | 40,619 | 44,356 |
| Unique Visitors | 18,366 | 18,123 | 17,127 | 18,285 | 20,770 | 21,928 |

| | Nov 2011 | Dec 2011 | Jan 2012 | Feb 2012 | Mar 2012 | Apr 2012 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Page Views | 281,209 (+ 57,206 ePortfolio) | 206,732 (+ 34,904 ePortfolio) | 380,892 (+ 60,923 ePortfolio) | 308,330 (+ 68,543 ePortfolio) | 328,005 (+ 122,859 ePortfolio) | Not available |
| Visits | 47,599 | 36,979 | 57,207 | 52,705 | 56,661 | Not available |
| Unique Visitors | 23,305 | 18,985 | 27,110 | 26,082 | 27,903 | Not available |

CURRENT STATUS

There have been a number of developments during the year May 2011 to April 2012.

GP Training Programme Intake 2012

In January 2012, this year's GP training programme intake took place entirely online. A total of 282 applicants applied for 157 available places using the system. This is the eighth consecutive year that the application process has taken place online. Last year, the system was upgraded so that applicants received information on interviews and placements online. This year, an administrative fee was added to each application and the application form was amended.

MICGP Examination Intake 2011

For the fifth year running, the MICGP Examination application process was conducted online via www.icgp.ie. This has proved to be a very efficient process and the feedback from examination

candidates has been very positive. The projected figure of candidates who will sit the MICGP Examination 2012, based on the online applications, is 431.

Quality Control of the Website

In 2007, we bought the services of Site Improve – a company that provides internet-based tools and services for the management and maintenance of websites and intranets. The ICGP website comprises 3,800 pages with over 6,700 links to outside websites and 29,000 attachments which constitute a huge site to maintain. We have purchased the Site Check module for the ICGP website which checks the entire site for errors in spelling, links and accessibility. Site Check provides instructions on why and where issues occur, and clear recommendations on how to fix them, and has greatly improved quality control on the website.

Exam Orientation Course

We created an interactive elearning course for participants of the MICGP Exam 2011. This online course gives guidance on preparing for all four modules of the exam and also provides details of the new examination formats which came into effect in 2011. This course was updated in November 2011.

Professional Competence

The main activity on the ICGP website during 2011-2012 was the development of an online registration process and an eportfolio to support the College's Professional Competence Scheme. The aim of the registration form was to make registration as simple as possible for users. The eportfolio was developed to allow users to easily record their professional competence activity. Once you are enrolled on the ICGP system you get automatic access to the eportfolio.

There are four main screens on the system:

1. A **Dashboard Page** which gives an overview of your planned and completed activity.
2. An **Add an Item** page where you can enter details of your professional competence activity.
3. A **Search Events** page where you can search the database of accredited events.
4. An **Activity Log** which gives a summary of all activities – either planned or completed. This area can also hold all supporting documentation that you will need in case of being audited.

In November 2011, the eportfolio won a commendation at the Irish Medical Times Healthcare Awards. The eportfolio was one of three entries shortlisted in the Best Use of IT category. We are due to launch the second version of the eportfolio in April 2012. This upgrade includes improvements to the interface and upgrades to the search facility in response to feedback from users.

Website Redesign

In 2012, we have been working on a redesign of the ICGP website. We hope to launch the new look during the summer.

FUTURE PLANS

During the summer, we will be concentrating on improving security on our servers and upgrading the login process on the ICGP website. In the latter half of 2012, we will upgrade the site search and the online library catalogue. In addition, we will look at creating a platform of our elearning resources which will link with the Professional Competence ePortfolio.

Communications & Public Relations Report

AUTHORS | DR JOHN BALL, CHAIR OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE, AND ANGELA BYRNE, WEB & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



The communications and public relations role is undertaken by Dr John Ball (Chairman, Communications Committee) and Angela Byrne (Web and Communications Manager).

SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE

In the past year, the Communications Committee increased its numbers and became a vibrant part of improving our message to the public and our members. We now have five active members of the Committee and have several others who have, from time to time, contributed their expertise and experience to enhance our communicating.

From a public representation and media point of view, many requests continued to be made to the College. A media course was run to provide extra advice to those on the frontline exposed to media queries. Aileen O'Meara, a journalist and media consultant, provided this course. We also engage her services when required and get advice on how to approach difficult issues that arise.

In view of the times we are in, there was an increase in 'money/value' related queries from the media. We carefully responded to the topics that lie within the remit of the College aims. There has also been a move, as discussed by the Council, for us to be more proactive on certain core health issues that we feel have importance to general practice such as the recent alcohol legislation proposals.

We are also both under increased scrutiny and in an increasingly crowded space with regard to commenting on health. Now more than ever we need to be present and to continue to best represent the image that the public have of their GPs – as accessible and practical health workers. We need to continue to have a strong media presence and be the 'go-to' people for the media when topical subjects are in our domain and when we can help to impart a positive message about general practice.

There have been a number of developments regarding communication with the College. The Committee decided to increase and improve our communication with members by engaging the services of the ezine company Newsweaver. This will allow increased communication in an easy to read, online format. The first edition was sent to all members during March and will hopefully be a springboard for two-way communication between members and the College. The College management have also been very active with nationwide meetings to improve communication concerning the delivery of the Professional

Competence Scheme. This has been a challenge and huge credit goes to those who delivered these talks at the coalface.

Many thanks to Angela and Kieran who receive and disseminate information, and direct the Committee so well. It has certainly helped make my first year in the role manageable and enjoyable.

Dr John Ball, April 2012

PROJECT ACTIVITIES/TASKS

- Represent the College on all national and regional media.
- Liaise with the College officers and executive on the College's position on issues.
- Liaise between journalists and College spokespersons and personnel.
- Organise and facilitate media coverage for the AGM and other College meetings and events.
- Develop and maintain a communication process embracing College staff/projects, faculties and members.
- Organise workshops in media skills for College spokespersons.
- Collate monthly College news for Forum.
- Facilitate meetings of the editorial board of Forum.

MEDIA RELATIONS

Material Sent to the Media

Press releases and photographs issued to the media:

- ICGP AGM, May 2011.
 - ICGP Summer School, June 2011.
 - Guide to Data Protection Publication, June 2011.
 - Announcement of New GP Clinical Leads, June 2011.
 - ICGP Encourages Interest in New Medical Council Performance Assessment Plans, June 2011.
 - Announcement of New GP Clinical Lead in Mental Health, September 2011.
 - Launch of Online Smoking Cessation Course, September 2011.
 - ICGP/NAGPT Conference, October 2011.
 - E-learning workshop, October 2011.
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- MICGP Graduation, October 2011.
- ICGP Winter Meeting, November 2011.
- Primary Care Team Report, November 2011.
- Announcement of LARC Course, December 2011.
- National GP Trainers Conference, February 2012.
- ICGP National Referral Form for GPs to Outpatient & Secondary Care: A Guidance Document for GPs, February 2012.
- Announcement of new NEGs director, March 2011.
- ICGP Spring Sessions, March 2012.
- ICGP AGM, April 2012.
- ICGP Summer School, April 2012.

Media Queries

The media desk was busy again during the 2011-2012 period with an average of 20-30 queries per month. Each month, media reports are prepared for College officers. A full report for 2011-2012 is available on request.

A number of important topics were in the spotlight this year which resulted in the College and general practice being called on to give their comments and opinions. This also led to a number of high profile appearances for our College spokespersons.

Media Watch

In November 2007, we entered into a contract with Electric Search, an online search engine. This search engine monitors the Irish press for media reports relevant to the ICGP. It then automatically alerts us via email and brings us directly to relevant articles. This has allowed us to keep track of all media reports on the ICGP and general practice issues.

COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

Emails to Members

The following topics have also been emailed to members since April 2011:

| Title | Date | Audience |
|---|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Medical Council Request for External Experts to Sit on Appeal Boards – 13 and 15 April | 01/04/2011 | Council members |
| Minor surgery course | 11/04/2011 | GPs in Waterford area |
| Irish Medicines Board, GlaxoSmithKline Advisory Notification Regarding Changes to Prescribing Information of Augmentin® Range of Products | 13/04/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| Galway Faculty April meeting and AGM | 15/04/2011 | Galway faculty members |
| Theory course for cervical smear takers course 6th May Galway | 20/04/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| Enrolment on ICGP Professional Competence Scheme | 20/04/2011 | All members in ROI |
| Research in minor surgery | 21/04/2011 | All members in ROI |
| ICGP Annual General Meeting, Business Session Agenda | 26/04/2011 | All members in ROI |
| ICGP AGM 2011 | 26/04/2011 | All members in ROI |
| ICGP AGM – 6-8 May 2011 | 28/04/2011 | All members in ROI |
| ICGP Summer School – 23-25 June, Kilkenny | 17/05/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| ICGP Network of Establishing GPs Update | 26/05/2011 | NEGs members |
| Louth Faculty meeting | 02/06/2011 | Louth faculty members |
| Update from the HPSC on Verocytotoxigenic E Coli (VTEC) | 07/06/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| Summer School Registration Closing Friday 10 June 2011 | 08/06/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| National Report on Chronic Disease Management in Irish General Practice | 23/06/2011 | All members in ROI |
| Early bird rate for ICGP Courses | 28/06/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| VTEC O104 outbreak in Germany, and now France | 29/06/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| GP Lead in Mental Health advertisement | 29/06/2011 | All members in ROI |
| Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2009 | 18/08/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| GPIT Roadshow Programmes | 05/09/2011 | All members in ROI |
| Library Survey | 06/09/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| ICGP Memorial Service – Friday, 21 October 2011 | 08/09/2011 | All members and trainees and overseas |
| Notice for circulation Kerry faculty | 15/09/2011 | Kerry faculty members |

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|---|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Clinical Course and Examinations Refund Scheme | 16/09/2011 | Trainees only |
| Important information for ICGP members from the Irish Medicines Board | 19/09/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| ICGP Network of Establishing GPs | 27/09/2011 | NEGs members |
| National Immunisation Advisory Committee - Updated Immunisation Guidelines | 28/09/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| 2 GP Leads Acute Coronary Heart Disease and Rehabilitation Medicine | 28/09/2011 | All members in ROI |
| Cork City faculty meeting | 29/09/2011 | Cork city faculty members |
| ICGP Network of Establishing GPs Regional Meeting | 07/10/2011 | NEGs members |
| ICGP Memorial Service - Friday, 21st October, 2011 | 19/10/2011 | All members and trainees and overseas |
| ICGP Network of Establishing GPs – Regional Meetings | 21/10/2011 | NEGs members |
| Training Course for GP Trainers, Portugal, December and June 2012 (EURACT) | 25/10/2011 | Programme directors and GP Trainers |
| ICGP Winter Meeting – Saturday, 26 November 2011, Sheraton Hotel, Athlone | 25/10/2011 | All members in ROI |
| ICGP Network of Establishing GPs – Regional Meetings | 26/10/2011 | NEGs members |
| Prescribing protocol for patients attending the psychiatric services | 27/10/2011 | GPs in Dublin areas |
| ICGP Winter Meeting Programme | 02/11/2011 | All members |
| Performance Procedures – Medical Council draft. Further rules for public consultation | 07/11/2011 | All members in ROI |
| ICGP Winter Meeting Workshop: Beyond retirement – can you ever retire? | 08/11/2011 | All members in ROI |
| ICGP Year Book and Diary 2012 and new ICGP Wall Planner 2012 | 10/11/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| Informing CME tutors and faculty chairs | 10/11/2011 | CME Tutors and faculty chairs |
| Cork City faculty meeting | 22/11/2011 | Cork city faculty members |
| ICGP Report on Primary Care Teams: A GP Perspective | 23/11/2011 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| ICGP Winter Meeting/Substance Misuse Conference – Saturday, 26 November | 25/11/2011 | All members |
| GPIT Roadshow – Tullamore | 30/11/2011 | GPs in the Midlands and West |
| ICGP Minor Surgery | 30/11/2011 | All members and 4th Year trainees |
| Cork City faculty meeting | 01/12/2011 | Cork city faculty members |
| ICGP Membership Through Equivalent Qualifications | 14/12/2011 | All members |
| Doctor of choice scheme – An Garda Síochána | 15/12/2011 | All members in ROI |
| GP Mindfulness Course | 22/12/2011 | All members in ROI |
| EURACT and EURACT Membership | 04/01/2012 | Trainers in ROI |

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|--|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Notice to CME tutors and faculties regarding audit sessions | 09/01/2012 | CME Tutors and faculties |
| Cork City faculty meeting | 18/01/2012 | Cork city faculty members |
| Updated recommendations from the National Immunisation Advisory Committee | 19/01/2012 | All members in ROI |
| Dun Laoghaire faculty meeting | 25/01/2012 | Dun Laoghaire faculty members |
| ICGP minor surgery course | 31/01/2012 | All members and 4th Year trainees |
| PIP Breast Implants – update information re. IMB | 02/02/2012 | All members in ROI |
| ICGP Groupscheme Website | 07/02/2012 | All members |
| ICGP Guidance Document for GPs on National Referral Form to Secondary Care | 07/02/2012 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| Letter to medical practitioners re. NSMS | 08/02/2012 | All members in ROI |
| ICGP minor surgery course – reminder | 10/02/2012 | All members and 4th Year trainees |
| Influenza-like illness rate now above Irish baseline threshold – antiviral drugs recommended for defined risk groups | 17/02/2012 | All members in ROI |
| Email to Sun Setters group | 07/03/2012 | over 55 in the ROI |
| IMB recommendations on new dosages for children's liquid paracetamol medicines for oral use | 12/03/2012 | ROI members |
| Minor surgery course and timetable | 13/03/2012 | ROI members |
| Heart patient wise self management courses | 15/03/2012 | Kilkenny faculty |
| Opening of the GMS and implications for general practice and the establishing GP meetings | 16/03/2012 | NEGs members |
| EuroPrevent Conference 2012 | 26/03/2012 | All members and trainees in ROI |
| MICGP written papers | 26/03/2012 | All trainees |
| EURACT and EURACT membership | 04/01/2012 | Trainers in ROI |

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS

The fifth annual newsletter to members was distributed in December 2011 and outlined the main activities in the College throughout the year. The College received good feedback about the newsletter and members felt it was a good way to communicate College activities.

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

Forum

Angela Byrne continued to collate monthly Forum news from ICGP staff, members and committees. A meeting of the Forum editorial board was organised in November 2011 and February 2012.

In-house Development of Materials

The communications manager has been working with an external designer to create a number of templates for in-house use. These include publications, application forms, brochures, conference programmes and course prospectuses. A series of training sessions were organised to train in-house staff on how to update documents and create professional looking material. This development will help the College to have a more professional image and to reduce the cost of design and printing material.

FUTURE PLANS

- Reactivate the network of GPs who used to feature on local radio on a regular basis in the past.
 - Update the College database – useful contacts by area of interest.
 - Become more proactive on important health issues.
 - Update the College website (MyICGP, Membership areas).
 - Creation of email newsletters to in-house and external groups.
 - Media training for College spokespersons.
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Quality & Standards Committee Report

**AUTHOR | DR SHEILA ROCHFORD, CHAIR
QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE**



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr Philippa Kildea Shine, Dr Margaret O’Riordan, Dr Mary Sheehan, Dr John Cox, Dr Mark Walsh, Mr Kieran Ryan, Dr Richard Brennan, Dr Paul Armstrong, Dr John Delap, Professor Tom O’Dowd, Ms Anne Cody (patient representative).

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Ms Caroline Murtagh and Ms Niamh Killeen.

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

It is my pleasure to deliver the first report from the Quality and Standards Committee, which was formed during the summer of 2011. This committee arose because of a perception that the previous education committee had developed too large a remit for effective functioning. This remit encompassed an oversight of the educational activities of the College in terms of content, quality and assurance.

A restructuring plan was devised and two education-focused committees were formed, namely the Education Governance Committee and the Quality and Standards Committee. The latter committee was charged with quality assurance aspects. To this end, it receives reports from the following sources: the Professional Competence Committee, the Quality in Practice Committee, the Joint HSE/Methadone Treatment Protocol Audit Review Group, and Dr Margaret O’Riordan, Head of Quality and Standards.

Part of the impetus for change came from the recognition of a need for greater clarity and accountability within the organisation in anticipation of increasing scrutiny and regulation by outside agencies.

Examples of this scrutiny include the involvement of HETAC and the Medical Council. The voluntary request by the ICGP for HETAC recognition of its educational initiatives has involved the ICGP in a rigorous appraisal of its activities and the process is nearing completion. The mandatory requirements of the Medical Council for the ICGP to retain its position as the provider of the Professional Competence Scheme for GPs (recognition is granted for a period of three years only) and as the provider of specialist GP training has also required considerable resources. The report from Dr Margaret O Riordan, Head of Quality and Standards, outlines these activities, as well as ICGP engagement with HIQA and other outside agencies, and a report on the functioning of primary care teams.

The Joint HSE/Methadone Treatment Protocol Audit Review Group is a further example of the intersection of roles between the ICGP and an outside agency, and the need for collaboration and clarity around respective roles and responsibilities.

The effect of regulation is most tangible for GPs in the terms of the recently enacted professional competence requirements. The Professional Competence Committee has overseen the launch of the Professional Competence Programme for GPs. A highlight was the awarding of a prize for website design

when the ICGP professional competence eportfolio won a commendation at the IMT Healthcare Awards in the 'best use of IT' category. Individual GPs continue to express difficulties in complying with the requirements of re-accreditation. The Professional Competence Committee remains committed to enabling GPs to fulfill their requirements. A further anticipated challenge under the terms of the Medical Practitioners Act will be the development of appropriate structures to assist GPs who fail to achieve the required standards of accreditation or who have been identified by the Medical Council as requiring remediation.

The Quality in Practice Committee (QIP) continues to produce quick reference guides on clinical and non-clinical topics of relevance to general practice in Ireland. This year has seen its remit widened to include a review of documents produced by the HSE Chronic Care Programmes for the management of chronic disease. Feedback from QIP to the Chronic Care programmes has been both strategic and clinical, tempering expectations of what can be achieved with limited resources.

The Quality and Standards Committee meets twice per year. Work on this committee as well as that on all of the committees reporting involves a considerable voluntary input from GPs who have many other calls on their time and expertise. I want to take this opportunity to record appreciation of their efforts as well as that of the administrative staff supporting them.

The challenge remains to ensure the heavy weight of regulation doesn't damage the intelligent kindness at the heart of the patient-doctor relationship. The ICGP exists to manage that burden of regulation more effectively for GPs, allowing them to get on with the real work at the coal-face of general practice. The Quality and Standards Committee will continue to strive to meet that challenge in the year ahead.

Head of Quality & Standards Report

**AUTHOR | DR MARGARET O RIORDAN, ICGP
HEAD OF QUALITY & STANDARDS**



The last year has been a challenging time for everyone in general practice and no less so for the staff of the ICGP. Internally, the appointment of a new CEO, the amalgamation of all staff into one building and the additional workload created by the creation and development of the Professional Competence Scheme, were among the major changes successfully undertaken. The ICGP staff are to be commended for their commitment and support for the endorsement of a quality management approach across the organisation at a time of monumental change in the internal and external working environment.

The health services are undergoing major reform which is placing increased demands on all health professionals, including GPs. The Clinical Care Programmes and the Special Delivery Unit are central to this process. Therefore, the ongoing ICGP promotion of general practice and contribution to health policy through interaction with external agencies including Minister Reilly and Minister Shortall, the Department of Health & Children, the Health Services Executive, the Health Information & Quality Authority, the Medical Council, the Forum of Postgraduate Training Bodies, the National Cancer Control Programme, Patient Representatives and the Irish Medical Organisation are crucial in the current environment.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Professional Competence Scheme

The commencement of Part II of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 on 1 May 2011 placed a statutory responsibility on registered medical practitioners to maintain their professional competence. The ICGP has been accredited as the professional competence scheme (PCS) provider for general practice and the head of quality and standards is the medical director of the scheme. The ICGP ethos is to support and facilitate members of the PCS to meet their statutory continuing professional development (CPD) activities. Ms Jantze Cotter (PCS Manager), Ms Maureen Dempsey (Administrator) and Ms Carol White (Administrator) with the support of the PCS subcommittee and its chair Dr Mary Sheehan, have undertaken sterling work on behalf of the ICGP over the past year. The development of the eportfolio, led by Ms Angela Byrne, and the multiple workshops and development of the Audit Toolbox by Dr Claire Collins, have played a significant role in the success of the PCS to date. ICGP librarians Ms Gillian Doran and Ms Patricia Patton have also provided extensive support to members in meeting their PCS requirements.

Primary Care Team Report

As head of quality and standards, I led on an ICGP report from the perspective of Irish GPs in order to assess how many primary care teams are functioning successfully, the advantages of primary care teams and the perceived barriers to GP involvement. Consultation took place with a wide variety of ICGP members from large and small, rural and urban practices throughout the country and the report was published in November 2011.

In order to support GPs to maximise their potential to improve the quality of service to patients and optimise the overall use of health service funding, the report has highlighted that the following actions need to be taken as a matter of urgency:

- If PCTs are truly seen as the lynch pin to support the health service, resources must be ring fenced for both primary care and general practice development.
- As there are finite resources available for the health service, ring fenced resources need to move from secondary to primary care and specifically to general practice if chronic disease management is to be optimised.
- Research and monitoring to demonstrate concrete outcomes and measures of success for PCTs needs to be undertaken.
- Issues related to patient consent and confidentiality should be clearly addressed and safeguards agreed.
- Access to diagnostics for GPs will enhance services for patients, save money for the health service and support appropriate hospital referrals.
- Engagement at local level in planning and developing services needs to be undertaken and it must be acknowledged that one size does not fit all.
- PCTs should be practice population based rather than geographical.
- Access and eligibility issues for PCTs need to be addressed.
- Investment in ICT and in particular the creation of a unique patient identifier, coupled with secure email, should be a priority for the health services.
- Clarity around support for infrastructural developments needs to be provided.

The report was well received by ICGP members, reported widely in the medical media and quoted in Dail Eireann by Minister Shortall. The findings have been discussed with the HSE and ministers at every opportunity.

HETAC Accreditation

The HETAC external peer review visit to the ICGP took place in February 2012. This visit was step five in a six part process seeking HETAC accreditation for ICGP educational activity. The outcome from the visit was largely positive. Areas that need to be addressed and areas that merited commendation were highlighted. On receipt of the official visitors report, we look forward to the next steps in the process. Mr Nick Fenlon (Director of Education), Ms Aisling Lavelle (Medical Education Consultant) and Ms Louise Nolan (Programme Administrator) have provided leadership in the application for HETAC accreditation and are to be commended for their achievements to date in this process.

As head of quality and standards, I have been involved at a strategic level in the application for HETAC accreditation. This has involved promoting quality improvement at all levels in the organisation and conducting an internal audit of activities to date including governance at a strategic and operational level. As part of an overall quality management review, I have conducted individual interviews with all staff members: six members of the management team, six project directors and 21 administrative staff members. Following the meeting, summary core data for each member of staff and general issues were recorded in relation to work processes which were combined to provide suggestions for change.

North/South Co-operation

An exploratory meeting took place in Drogheda between RCGP Northern Ireland and the ICGP in January 2012. Discussions took place on the various ways in which North/South co-operation could be progressed. As a starting point, it was agreed to explore the accreditation of out of hours co-ops based on a model developed by RCGP NI and successfully completed by NowDoc in Donegal. This approach was endorsed by the ICGP Executive at their January meeting.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Committees

- Member the ICGP Council and Executive.
- Member of the Quality and Standards Committee.
- Member of the ICGP Education Governance Committee.
- Member of the ICGP Postgraduate Training Committee.
- Member of the ICGP Research Committee.
- Member of the ICGP Professional Competence Committee (and Audit Subcommittee).
- Member of the ICGP Quality and Practice Committee.
- Member of the AUDGPI executive Committee.
- Member of the Forum of Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies.
- Member of the Advisory Group Tallaght Hospital Inquiry.
- Member of the National Cancer Control Programme Tumour Group.

Presentations/Workshops

- 'Health Policy Reform – General Practice, the Solution': ICGP AGM May 2011.
- Professional Competence Workshops:
ICGP Summer School, June 2011.
ICGP Corrigan Faculty ICGP, September 2011.
'Can I have a Check Up?' Workshops.
ICGP Winter Meeting, November 2011.
ICGP Spring Sessions, April 2012.
- 'GPs as Leaders' ICGP Leadership Course, February 2012.
- TCD GP Trainers Workshop (in conjunction with Dr Gerry Mansfield) 'GP Registrar Assessment', March 2012.

Publications and Reports

- Riordan M. Primary Care Teams – A GP Perspective. ICGP, November 2012.
- O'Riordan M, Dahinden A, Aktürk Z, Ortiz JM, Dagdeviren N, Elwyn G, Micallef A, Murtonen M, Samuelson M, Struk P, Tayar D, Thesen J. 2011. *Dealing with uncertainty in general practice – an essential skill for the general practitioner. Quality in Primary Care.* 19, 175-181.
- Member of the European Group Revision of the European Definition of General Practice. WONCA Publication, September 2011.

FUTURE PLANS

Building on all the activities currently underway will be the challenge for the coming year. Strengthening relationships with external agencies and consolidating our internal resources will be the key to success.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Ms Orla Sherlock provides excellent administrative support which is much appreciated.

Methadone Treatment Protocol Audit Review Group Report

AUTHOR | DR JOHN COX, CHAIRPERSON

ABOUT THE AUDIT REVIEW GROUP

The Methadone Treatment Protocol (MTP) was implemented in October 1998. A joint ICGP and then ERHA audit review group was set up under the provision of the protocol. This group was given the remit of providing training, continuing medical education (CME) for GPs participating in the methadone protocol. As part of their contract of services with the Health Boards (now the HSE), GPs agree to participate in CME and an annual external audit of their methadone patients. The Audit Review Group (ARG) was given the task of devising a system of annually auditing GPs participating in the Methadone Treatment Protocol.

The group met six times during the period of the report: February, March, June, October, December 2011 and in February 2012.

The clinical audit facilitator resigned at the end of 2010 and was not replaced until September 2011. Consequently, the number of audits carried out and discussed was fewer than in 2010. Areas for improvement highlighted through audit included the need for improved documentation, particularly in relation to the recording of viral screen results, vaccinations status, drug screen results, clinical indications for benzodiazepine prescriptions and the regular review of psychotropic medications.

Following piloting and testing, a self-audit process was developed and finalised. It is now ready for roll out to GPs who have completed an external audit with no issues.

An external audit will continue to be available to GPs who have not been audited for five years, who are new to auditing, are moving from Level 1 to Level 2 status, or who have had an unsatisfactory audit.

A committee was set up in 2011 to review and update the guidelines for the treatment of opiate users in primary care. The committee is composed of representatives from the ICGP, the HSE, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and the Irish College of Psychiatry. Dr Des Crowley and Dr Kieran Harkin are the ICGP representatives on the committee. The committee hopes to finalise the work by June 2012. In the interim, an addendum to the current guidelines has been put on the website for clarification.

The work plan for the coming year includes updating the website, the development of other relevant audit tools to meet IMC requirements, linking with the ICGP Research and Audit Committee, uploading helpful patient management tools to IT systems and the development of a system to report on audit activity.

Membership of the committee was due for review at the end of 2011. The review took place and a number of changes were made to the membership (see terms of reference).

ICGP Professional Competence Scheme Report

**AUTHORS | DR MARY SHEEHAN (CHAIR ICGP PCS COMMITTEE)
MS JANTZE COTTER (PCS MANAGER)**

OTHER MEMBERS OF PROGRAMME TEAM

Dr Mary Sheehan (Chair), Ms Jantze Cotter, Dr John Delap, Ms Maureen Dempsey, Dr Mary Favier, Dr Henry Finnegan, Dr John Gillman, Dr Mary Glancy, Dr Aisling Lavelle, Dr Brian O'Mahony, Dr Margaret O'Riordan, Dr Sheila Rochford, Mr Kieran Ryan and Ms Carol White.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME

The commencement of Part 11 of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 on 1 May 2011 placed a statutory responsibility on registered medical practitioners to maintain their professional competence and enrol on a professional competence scheme. The ICGP entered an arrangement with the Irish Medical Council to operate the Professional Competence Scheme. The ICGP's key responsibilities in operating the scheme are to provide a supportive, collegiate, professional development environment to facilitate GPs' enrolment, engagement in and recording of continuing professional development (CPD) activities. In addition, the ICGP will provide a yearly statement of activities recorded by participating doctors. These activities are monitored by the IMC through the provision of an annual operational plan, a qualitative and quantitative report against key performance indicators, and a financial report.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES/TASKS DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

As we have just completed the first year of the PCS, it is valuable to reflect on the supports that were established to facilitate GPs to enrol and engage in activities for the maintenance of professional competence. Along with this, the ICGP has actively engaged in the PCS developments with IMC and the Forum of Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies. As this is the first year of the schemes, there is an appreciation that time is required for GPs to familiarise themselves with a new system, that merely formalises the recording of activities in which they have already been involved, and also develop skills related to auditing their practices. This involves testing a formal model of lifelong learning and the systems that have been established to facilitate this. This message has been articulated to the IMC.

The ICGP Professional Competence Scheme Committee and PCS Department have developed the system and processes to support GPs in meeting their PCS requirements. This has included:

- The establishment of an online enrolment system for GPs to enrol on the scheme.
- The development of step by step guides to inform GPs of the Scheme requirements and how to enrol.
- The development of the eportfolio – an online recording system for GPs to record CPD activities and track progress to meeting the Scheme requirements.

- The development of tools to support GPs with completing the clinical audits – clinical audit toolkit, sample audits.
- A review of and the enhancement of the application processes to recognise educational activities for external CPD.
- Help desk support – email and phone. We responded to more than 2,000 phone enquiries and to approximately 2,600 emails.
- Regular updates on the web and FAQs in Forum, the ICGP journal.
- Recognised 668 educational external events for CPD credits.
- The production of an annual participation statement for individual doctors.
- Active engagement on the Forum of Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies: PCS Subcommittee and PCS Managers Group to develop common policies and guidelines.
- Representation on the IMC Forum Liaison Committee.
- GP representation on the IMC PCS Committee.
- Reporting on key deliverables to the Medical Council.

FUTURE PLANS

- To continue to provide support to ICGP PCS enrolees.
- To continue to actively engage with the IMC on the review and development of the schemes.
- To develop and expand programmes for GPs to avail of CPD credits.
- Negotiations are currently underway with the HSE to expand the CME small group networks.
- To enhance the eportfolio functions.
- A verification process will be scheduled around October 2012.
- To carry out an enrolee satisfaction survey to determine the development of programmes and activities to support the maintenance of professional competence.
- To develop an online application system for the recognition of external CPD activities.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

- Ms Maureen Dempsey – Senior Administrator (part time), Professional Competence Scheme.
- Ms Carol White – Senior Administrator (recognition of external CPD activity).

The development of this scheme has been very resource intensive from a system and operational perspective. This would not have been possible without the dedicated ICGP staff and PCS Committee/Subcommittee members, and feedback from the enrolees. The time, patience and intelligence contributed have been greatly appreciated.

Quality in Practice Subcommittee Report

AUTHOR | DR PAUL ARMSTRONG, CHAIRPERSON

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

Chairperson January - May 2011: Dr Sheila Rochford.

Chairperson May - September 2011: Dr Margaret O’Riordan.

Chairperson September - current: Dr Paul Armstrong.

Committee Members

Dr Ben Parmeter, Dr Ray O’Connor , Dr Andree Rochfort, Dr Sarah Carty, Dr Phillip Sheeran Purcell, Mr Dermot Folan, Dr Maria O’Mahony, Dr William Ralph, Dr Grainne Foley, Dr Sheila Rochford, Dr Margaret O’Riordan, Dr Paul Armstrong.

Resignations by Committee Members During 2011

Dr Andree Rochfort, Dr Sarah Carty, Dr Sheila Rochford.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE

The ICGP Quality in Practice Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Quality and Standards Committee, was established in 2004. It produces quick reference documents and guidelines on clinical and non-clinical areas on topics of relevance to general practice in Ireland. In many instances, these documents are produced in conjunction with outside bodies. The Quality in Practice Committee also supervises the competition for the annual ICGP Quality Improvement Award. In addition, the Committee reviews external documents from bodies such as HIQA, SARI and the HSE Chronic Care Programmes. It also looks at requests for the use of the ICGP logo in publications by external agencies.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES/TASKS

Chair of Committee

Dr Sheila Rochford stepped down as chair in May 2011. Dr Margaret O’Riordan subsequently served as interim chair until Dr Paul Armstrong took over this role in September 2011.

Project Officer

Dr Anna Cunney resigned as project officer in early January 2011. Dr Maria O’Mahony took over as project officer in June 2011. The post provides for two sessions per week to support the chair of the committee in view of the increasing workload.

Chronic Care Programmes

Consultation is ongoing with the Quality in Practice Committee in relation to the development of chronic care pathways for each of the national chronic care programmes. QIP feedback continues to be both strategic and clinical in nature. Throughout 2011, documents from the following chronic care programmes have been reviewed and feedback has been delivered by the QIP Committee:

- Asthma.
- Diabetes.
- Atrial Fibrillation/Stroke.
- Heart Failure.
- COPD.
- Dermatology.

SARI Documents (Strategy for the Control of Antimicrobial Resistance in Ireland)

The QIP Committee has provided several rounds of feedback regarding two documents that are being produced by SARI, namely Infection Control Guidelines and Antimicrobial Prescribing. The latter document has been published while the former document is still in development.

HIQA Documents (Health Information and Quality Authority)

The QIP Committee has reviewed several documents that have been produced by HIQA as follows:

- 'National Quality Assurance Criteria for Clinical Guidelines' – The QIP Committee engaged in a written consultation process regarding this draft document.
- 'General Practice Indicators of Quality Handbook' – This document was co-written by HIQA and the ICGP, and was reviewed by the QIP Committee.
- 'GP Referral Report' – The recommendations from this report were noted by the QIP Committee. Subsequent information leaflets regarding the new GP referral template were reviewed by the QIP Committee.

Quick Reference Guides (QRG)

During the course of 2011, several quick reference guides were published. These are listed in the section 'Project Outputs' below. Many QRGs continued throughout the pipeline and are still in development as listed below. Two documents (on osteoporosis management and perinatal depression) were halted as the developmental timeframe had exceeded an acceptable time and thus these documents were no longer up to date.

Quick Reference Guides in Development:

- Child & Adolescent Mental Health.
- Dementia.
- Childhood Obesity.
- Weight Management in Pregnancy.
- Coeliac Disease.

Operational Improvements

(a) Template for QRGs: It was agreed that there needs to be an agreed standardised template for all QRGs such that all recommendations are graded with clearly defined levels of evidence and a common format is used. This is currently in development.

(b) Policy for Proposed Submissions: It was agreed that proposals need to be submitted to the QIP Committee such that the committee grants approval for QRG to be developed. The proposal template is in development.

Evaluation Project

Ms Maria Leahy completed an evaluation project on the use of impact documents by primary care staff. A questionnaire was conducted with a 28% response rate. Responders were generally aware of the existence of ICGP guidelines but recommendations were made to increase the uptake of same.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

- **Referral of People with Depression to Specialist Mental Health Services**
This quick reference guide was developed as a collaborative initiative between the ICGP and the College of Psychiatry of Ireland. (Published in October 2011.)
- **Management of Pre-Gestational and Gestational Diabetes Mellitus**
This quick reference guide was written by Dr Velma Harkins on behalf of the ICGP Quality in Practice Committee, and is adapted from the HSE guidelines for the Management of Pre-Gestational and Gestational Diabetes Mellitus from Preconception to the Postnatal Period. (Finalised in December 2011 and published in January 2012.)
- **Early Psychosis: Diagnosis and Management from a GP Perspective**
This quick reference guide was written by Dr Blanaid Gavan, Dr Niall Turner and Dr Eadbhard O'Callaghan in conjunction with the ICGP. (Published in February 2011.)
- **HSE/ICGP Weight Management for Primary Care Staff**
The HSE-ICGP Weight Management Treatment Algorithm and accompanying BMI chart were developed by a multidisciplinary working group comprising members of the team from the Weight Management Treatment Service, St Columille's Hospital, Loughlinstown and HSE community based dieticians, physical activity co-ordinators, psychologist and health promotion officers. (Published in July 2011.)

- **Improving Accessibility of Documents for Review by the QIP Committee**

A secure webpage has been developed on the ICGP website so that QIP committee members can review all documents for forthcoming meetings online. Committee members can also upload comments which are visible to all users.

- **GPIT Initiative on the Linkage of Quick Reference Guides to the Medical Record for Use in the Consultation**

A potential solution was agreed with GPIT to provide a link from the software system toolbar to the QIP webpage.

- **Summaries of quick reference guides** have been published in Forum magazine on a monthly basis in order to increase visibility of new and existing quick reference guides.

- **Audit tools based on current quick reference guides (QRGs)** have been developed for both the COPD and Warfarin QRGs. Initially, an audit sample template was developed and agreed upon before creating individual audit tools for COPD and Warfarin.

- **Quality Improvement Award**

The annual ICGP Quality Improvement Award is sponsored by Promed and will be presented at the ICGP AGM in May 2011.

FUTURE PLANS

- Documents produced for the management of chronic disease continue to be reviewed by the committee as they are produced.
- Work is needed and underway on developing a quick reference guide (QRG) and on updating an existing quick reference guide. Further discussion is needed regarding topics and content, the cost of production and the workload.
- A considerable amount of work is necessary over the next few months.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

Ms Janet Stafford of the ICGP has provided administrative support to the Quality in Practice Committee since May 2011.

Research Centre Report

AUTHOR | DR CLAIRE COLLINS, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH



OTHER MEMBERS OF TEAM

ICGP Research Committee Chair: Professor Tom Fahey.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME

The main aim of the ICGP research programme is to develop and support research and audits in general practice in a structured format. The ICGP Research Committee supports the programme through the provision of advice and direction. We aim to contribute to the knowledge base of general practice and to support evidence-based practice.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAMME

The ICGP's 'Strategic Plan 2008-2013' highlights the importance of research to its mandate. Of particular relevance to the national action plan for health research is the strategic action to "contribute to the evidence base that underpins quality general practice" specified in the 'Strategic Plan 2008-2013' (under the goal of 'A healthier community through high quality general practice' in the area of 'Quality general practice'. The associated action plan outlines the following activities:

- Take a leadership role in identifying and undertaking research related to general practice.
- Develop relationships with the research sector.
- Support the development of research skills, capacity and infrastructure in general practices.
- Expand the Academic Senior Registrar programme.
- Push for career pathways for those involved in education, training and research.
- Maintain and enhance the publications capacity of the ICGP.

In addition to the above, the following four areas were focussed on in the past year:

- Advisory/support for membership and other programme directors.
- Research and audit activities.
- General practice training support.
- Liaison with external academic and other research colleagues and the collaborative implementation of relevant findings.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES/TASKS DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

The following projects have recently been completed:

- Flu vaccination effectiveness study 2011/12 with HPSC.
- Educational needs assessment for a suicide awareness course.
- Data collection for the international QUALICOPC project.
- ICGP membership survey.
- Preliminary research on a chronic care self-management course.
- Evaluation of a psychiatry consultation-liaison model.

Publications

Fitzpatrick P, Fitzsimon N, Lonergan M, Collins C, Daly L. Heartwatch: the effect of a primary care-delivered secondary prevention programme for cardiovascular disease on medication use and risk factor profiles. *European Journal of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation* Feb 2011 18(1): 129 – 135.

Fitzpatrick P, Fitzsimon N, Lonergan M, Collins C, Daly L. GP-delivered programme of secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease; routinely recorded factors as early highlighters of likelihood of patient non-adherence. *Ir J Med Sci* 2011;179 (Suppl 8): S308.

Fitzpatrick P, Fitzsimon N, Lonergan M, Collins C, Daly L. The effect of a GP-delivered secondary prevention programme for cardiovascular disease on medication and risk factor profiles at 3.5 years follow-up. *Ir J Med Sci* 2011;179 (Suppl 11): S439.

Collins C, Finn C, Meade B, O’Cuinneagáin F. Heartwatch – Strengthening the Foundation of General Practice Evidence in Ireland. *NIHS* June 2011 6(1): 106.

Sharon M Cooley, Jennifer C Donnelly, Thomas Walsh, Claire Collins. Corrina McMahon, John Gillan FRCPATH and Michael P Geary. The impact of positive acquired thrombophilia serology on ultrasound, obstetric outcome and the placenta in a low-risk primigravid population. *Obstetric Medicine* 2011; 4: 15–19.

Conference Presentations

Claire Collins, Anne-Sophie Barret, Joan O’Donnell, Aidan O’Hora, Suzie Coughlan, Michael Joyce, Joanne Moran, Allison Waters, Aoibheann O’Malley, Darina O’Flanagan. Monitoring the influenza vaccine effectiveness using the general practitioners’ sentinel surveillance system in Ireland. Poster presentation at the EGPRN Autumn Meeting 2011.

O’Brien J, Collins C, NiRiain A, Long A, O’Neill D. Elder abuse and neglect: a survey of Irish general practitioners. Oral Presentation at CARDI Conference, November 2011.

O'Brien J., Collins C., NiRiain A., Long A., O'Neill D. Elder abuse: the role of the general practitioner. Oral Presentation at the EUGMS 2011 Congress.

Marsden P, Gallagher J, Ledwidge M, Weakliam D, Collins C, O'Riordan M, White B, McDonald K. General Practitioners' perception of heart failure services in Ireland highlights ready access to diagnostics and opinion as major deficiency. Poster presentation at the AUDGPI meeting March 2012.

Representations

During the past year, Dr Claire Collins represented the ICGP on the following:

- National group regarding the creation of a common ethics form for non-clinical trials and the IT sub-committee, who are investigating and advancing an electronic online process for such ethics applications.
- National representative to the European General Practice Research Network and member of its Research Strategy Committee, and is the EJGP English language editor for the EGPRN abstracts.
- Mental Health Commission Research Committee.
- Advisory group of a project to evaluate a telemedicine project.
- HIQA Referrals Project.
- HIQA Clinical Terminologies Review Advisory Group.
- HIQA National Standard for Patient Information Group.
- FORFAS National Research Prioritisation Exercise.
- National Disability Authority Guideline Development Advisory Group.

Research and Audit Conference

The second ICGP research and audit conference, Strengthening General Practice Through Supporting Professional Development, sponsored by MEDISEC, was held in June 2011 at the Lyrath Hotel, Kilkenny. As part of this, three research related workshops were held for delegates.

Other

- 'A Picture of General Practice 2010-2011: Strengthening General Practice Through Research and Audit' was prepared and is available on www.icgp.ie as well as in printed format.
 - An audit toolkit and a series of FAQ responses were created to assist members with their professional competence requirements.
 - Twenty-one audit workshops were held around the country. Online video and audio only podcasts on audit were also created.
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- Seven grant applications were prepared and submitted; five were successful.
- A guidance manual for programme directing teams and trainees on ethical considerations and a review of trainee projects was prepared.
- Collaboration on an Irish primary care research network has commenced.
- Other ICGP programmes and directors were supported via advice and collaboration (GP leads on chronic care programmes, Women's Health, Substance Misuse, Mental Health, Health in Practice, GP Training and Education).
- Dr Collins undertook the fast-track ethical review process of trainee projects and participated in the full review activities of the Research Ethics Committee.
- Dr Collins provided an oversight of the Research and Education Foundation grant scheme and the Heartwatch programme.

PROGRAMME MILESTONES/DELIVERABLES/OUTPUTS

- Five publications and four oral/poster conference presentations.
- ICGP Research and Audit Conference.
- Support of members in terms of professional competence audit requirements.
- Production of the booklet of abstracts 'A Picture of General Practice 2010-2011: Strengthening General Practice Through Research and Audit'.
- Five research grants obtained.
- International collaboration leading to involvement in EU projects.
- Five projects commenced and completed.
- Support of training schemes and trainees in terms of ethical guidance and review.

FUTURE PLANS

The action plan for 2012 focuses on developing relationships with the research sector and support of the development of research skills, capacity and infrastructure in general practices.

The 2012 conference will take place on Saturday 23 June at the Lyrath Hotel, Kilkenny. The programme has been finalised and is available on www.icgp.ie.

The following projects have been commenced and will be undertaken in the coming year:

- Audit of community acquired pneumonia.
- Research component of a chronic disease self-management course.
- Evaluation of CME in terms of impact on patient care.
- Pilot work on the capacity and processes for the iPCRN.

FUNDING SOURCE(S)

ICGP, HSE, EU Commission via NIVEL.

Research Ethics Committee Report

AUTHOR | PROF COLIN BRADLEY, CHAIR

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr Jean Holohan, Dr Cliona McGovern, Dr Teresa Maguire, Mrs Anne O’Cuinneagain, Dr Walter Cullen, Dr Cormac O’Dubhghaill, Dr Kieran Doran, Dr Claire Collins, Dr Philippa Kildea Shine and Ms Gina Menzies.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE’S ROLES AND ACTIVITIES

The Committee’s main function is to consider research proposals and to determine whether there are ethical issues to be addressed before the study can proceed. The Committee was initially established to provide ethical advice and approval for studies in general practice as a benefit to College members. The Committee also has a remit to offer general advice on ethical aspects of research and to develop College policy in this area. We have within the past year been seeking to involve vocational training programmes in providing research ethics training to trainees and screening trainee projects to review locally those with a low ethical risk. We are approved under the Clinical Trials Act to approve therapeutic clinical trials but we have not received any applications of this nature in recent years.

ACTIVITIES DURING PAST 12 MONTHS

The Committee met five times during 2011. We considered 75 applications which included 35 GP trainee studies. A new process of the review of trainee applications was introduced which involved a review by two committee members prior to a decision to either approve the project, approve subject to amendments (the most common outcome) or refer to the full committee. This process seems to have worked fairly well and it certainly reduced the turnaround time on most trainee applications and reduced the number of such applications that had to be considered by the full committee.

FUTURE PLANS

The committee plans to continue to work with the national director of specialist training and the training programmes to further streamline the procedures for trainee applications, and educate trainees and programme directing staff on research ethics procedures and considerations.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

Ms Janet Stafford.

Library and Information Service Report

AUTHORS | GILLIAN DORAN & PATRICIA PATTON, ICGP LIBRARIANS, WWW.ICGP.IE/LIBRARY

INTRODUCTION

This has been another busy and productive year for the Library and Information Service. Trish was acting librarian during the period April-18 October 2011 while Gillian was on maternity leave.

INFORMATION NEEDS

The ICGP library staff had an active 12 months with 1,014 queries received during the period April 2011-March 2012. The increase in queries coincides with the introduction of the new legislation requiring GPs to maintain their professional competence. (These figures are rounded to the nearest percent.)

| Queries Received From | Number | Percent |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| GPs | 577 | 57% |
| ICGP Staff | 292 | 29% |
| External | 154 | 14% |
| Total No. of Queries | 1,014 | 100% |

The majority of our queries come from GPs including those received from elearning participants, GP training, CME tutors and practice staff. We also deal with a number of queries internally from ICGP staff. External queries include those received from all external bodies including MedMedia, students, members of the public, researchers, libraries and organisations including the HSE, Dept of Health, HPSC, HRB and Irish Haemochromatosis Association, among others.

As can be seen in the table below, most of our queries are received via email followed by the phone. (These figures are rounded up to the nearest percent.)

| Queries Received Via | Number | Percent |
|----------------------|--------|---------|
| Email | 500 | 49% |
| Phone | 264 | 26% |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Person | 97 | 10% |
| Online | 67 | 8% |
| Other* | 60 | 6% |
| Fax | 16 | 1% |
| Post | 10 | 1% |
| Total No. of Queries | 1,014 | 100% |

(* denotes queries received via members of staff or the general info@icgp.ie email address)

Some of these requests involve multiple types of queries and fall into one or more of the above categories. (These figures are rounded to the nearest percent.)

| Types of Queries | Number | Percent |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Document Supply | 482 | 48% |
| General Query Service | 339 | 34% |
| Literature Searches | 167 | 16% |
| Training | 26 | 3% |
| Total | 1,014 | 100% |

The majority of queries received are with regard to document supply which involves supplying articles, guidelines, reports, etc. This is followed by general queries which can involve GP statistics to help with searching a database or the ICGP library catalogue, recommending useful websites and clinical tools, locating information on the ICGP website, patient information and referencing questions. We also carry out literature searches on topics on behalf of the requestor. This year, some examples of topics are brief interventions for alcohol and smoking cessation, adolescent health and the treatment of vitamin D deficiency. There has been an increased number of requests for literature searches for GPs completing their clinical audits, who are looking for standards and guidelines on which to base their audit. The summer period was also busy due to medical education students finishing their theses. Training can be either on an individual basis by appointment or in a group session.

TRAINING

The library was involved in many training sessions during this period, as follows:

- **eLearning Course Participants**

A short introductory session was presented by Trish on 30 September 2011 at the elearning workshop introducing the ICGP library and the services available. On 11 October 2011, Trish presented a session on literature searching to SCALES. An additional literature searching skills session was presented to LFOM Year 1 and Geriatrics at the elearning workshop on 27

January 2012. Gillian presented update sessions to Therapeutics and Women's Health participants at the January elearning workshops.

- **GP Trainees**

On 28 July 2011, Trish held a short session introducing the ICGP library and the services available for the TCD GP Training Scheme as requested by Dr Brendan O'Shea. Trish presented a literature searching skills session for the Naas GP trainees on 27 October 2011 and for the Tullamore GP trainees on 2 November 2011. This involved a general session on searching skills followed by an in depth one-to-one session with each trainee on their individual project. Gillian presented the benefits of the ICGP Library and Information Service to GP trainees as well as useful searching techniques, at the ICGP in December 2011.

- **Individuals**

Trish provided individual training by appointment on searching for specific topics and teaching literature search skills to eight members throughout this period. Trish also provided training on SurveyMonkey to three staff members and library induction sessions to Professor John Litt, a visiting professor from Australia and Mary Fanning, the new clinical audit nurse.

- **GP Trainers**

Gillian presented to GP trainers in the north east in March regarding an overview of the ICGP Library and Information Service, and also provided a demonstration of the IST module.

INFORMATION SKILLS MODULE

The ICGP Library and Information Service, in association with CPD Sessions and Clinical MedEd, has created an online information skills module that can be accessed by members to improve their information skills: www.icgp-education.ie. It is also eligible for two external CPD credits. This module is due to be launched at the AGM in May 2012.

LENUS

The ICGP joined LENUS in July 2011. LENUS (www.lenus.ie), the Irish Health Repository, is a national initiative designed to provide access to both current and archived Irish health research. Launched in February 2009, this repository is showing significant potential to become a key resource for Irish health researchers. The ICGP has become a contributor to LENUS which has the following benefits: it develops our links with external bodies, provides us with an international platform to gain a wider readership of our publications and promotes our organisation. All ICGP quality in practice guidelines have been added to the LENUS database.

COLLEGE SUPPORT

Trish was involved in resourcing the new Leadership Course which commenced in September 2012. Both Trish and Gillian attended the Forum Editorial Committee meetings on 26 October 2011 and 29 February 2012. Trish helped out at the MICGP Exam in March 2012.

ICGP PUBLICATIONS

The policy regarding ICGP publications which was originally produced by Gillian and Trish was updated in collaboration with the ICGP communications team in 2012.

GP TRAINING RESOURCES

Gillian is currently working with Dr Gerard Mansfield to develop an online collection for GP trainers. It is hoped this will cover a spectrum of topics of interest to GP trainers and assist them in their role.

RETIRING GPs

Dr Rita Doyle and Gillian are providing support to GPs who are planning to retire, are near retirement or are newly retired. A workshop was held in Athlone as part of the ICGP Winter Meeting. A discussion board has been set up so that topics relating to retirement issues can be discussed in private and a session is being planned for the AGM in May 2012.

NETWORKING & EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION

- **IRISH HEALTH LIBRARIES**

Trish participated in a focus group on the views on the future development of health librarianship in Ireland in the RCSI on 5 April 2011 as part of the SHELLI report 'Irish Health Libraries: New Directions – Report of the Status of Health Librarianship and Libraries in Ireland' which was published in January. The full report is available online: <http://www.hslg.ie/shelli>. Trish also attended the launch of the report on 26 January 2012 at the Dublin Dental Hospital.

- **LENUS USER GROUP**

Trish joined the LENUS working group and attended a meeting held on 24 November 2011 at the HSE, Dr Steeven's Hospital.

- **NCI LIBRARY QUALITY ASSURANCE PANEL**

Trish was asked to participate in the Peer Review Group on 6 March 2012 as part of the quality assurance process of the National College of Ireland's library.

- **HEALTH SCIENCE LIBRARIES JOURNAL STATISTICS COMMITTEE**

Gillian has been on this committee for several years and continues to attend meetings throughout the year. Currently, the committee is looking further at the issue of copyright especially with regard to digital material.

SURVEYS

A survey regarding the ICGP Library and Information Service was conducted by Trish during the summer of 2011 to assess journal usage and the needs of members. A total of 192 replies were received and taken into consideration for online journal development currently taking place.

Gillian continued to create and support various groups at the College regarding online survey production and distribution. These surveys included a declaration of interest for alternative routes to membership, ICGP course evaluations and Health in Practice questionnaires.

Gillian produced a summary of the ICGP Membership Needs Survey for the Executive and assisted with the related article in the January 2012 issue of Forum.

FUTURE PLANS

- **Development of the Online Library Section of the ICGP Website and ICGP Library Catalogue www.icgp.ie/library**
We continue to develop the library section of the ICGP website to keep it current. Changes are scheduled for September 2012 which will update the look and make the online library more user-friendly.
 - **Online Journals**
We are in the process of moving from print to online journals. This will allow us to supply documents more efficiently to our members. We plan to develop this system to give members direct access but we have run into technical difficulties with this and are currently looking at possible solutions.
 - **Research Listing**
Gillian is currently adding some general data to the research listing that was created a few years ago by Gillian and Dr Claire Collins. Trish has acquired some GP Trainee Project data which will be entered by Gillian to try to further develop this resource.
 - **HETAC**
After the HETAC validation visit in February 2012, the ICGP is awaiting an official report regarding HETAC accreditation. In this regard, the ICGP library plays a role in the provision of educational resources to ICGP members, course participants, etc. We aim to further develop our resources and services to maintain this standard.
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Post Graduate Training Committee Report

AUTHOR | DR MATT LYNCH, CHAIR



SUMMARY

The Post Graduate Training Committee, on behalf of the Council, considers applications for membership, accredits specialist training programmes and promotes development in training and assessment in general practice.

Subcommittees deal with MICGP examination matters, the re-accreditation of training programmes, the certification of training and curriculum development. The committee meets thrice yearly, and a newsletter is issued after meetings for distribution to the training community and membership of the PGTC.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PGTC

Dr Matt Lynch, Chair.

Dr Declan Mathews, Chair, Assessors Subcommittee.

Dr Tony Cox, Chair, Exam Subcommittee.

Dr Ursula Keegan, Chair Curriculum Development Subcommittee.

Dr Ciara McMeel, Chair, Certification Subcommittee.

Dr Kieran McGlade, Exam Development Committee.

Dr Margaret O Riordan, Head of Quality & Standards.

Dr Gerard Mansfield, National Director Specialist Training.

Mr Dermot Folan, Chief Operating Officer, ICGP.

Mr Kieran Ryan, CEO, ICGP.

Dr Karena Hanley, Chair, NAPD.

Dr Velma Harkins, NATIGP.

Dr Ciaran Bohane, NATGP.

Dr Mark Murphy, Trainee, NATGP.

Dr Michael Griffin, Assessors.

Dr Molly Owens, MICGP.

Dr Marie Carmody-Morris, ICGP Council.

Dr Thomas Foley, ICGP Council.

Dr David Hurley, ICGP Council.

Dr Donal McCafferty, ICGP Council.

Prof Fergus O Kelly, ICGP Council.

Dr Brendan O'Shea, EURACT.

ACTIVITIES/TASKS DURING THE YEAR

- Discussions were held over the summer, involving all the stakeholders, trainers, programme directors, examiners, trainees, and ICGP officials. These were wide ranging and dealt with moving forward towards a new model of GP training. These discussions involved the structure and processes of training following the proposed transfer of responsibility from the State to the ICGP. Much constructive work was done both in preparation and at meetings. I would like to thank all participants, especially Dr Gerry Mansfield, for all their work.

- Re-accreditation visits to the RCSI, Dublin Mid-Leinster and Donegal Training Programmes were undertaken by the Assessors Group in 2011.
- The MICGP-AR (alternative route to membership of the Irish College of General Practitioners) has progressed to the point of commencement in the near future.

ACHIEVEMENTS/OUTCOMES

- A total of 175 new members were elected to membership: 122 by examination (MICGP) and 53 by equivalent qualifications. Forty-one of these applicants held a UK qualification, four Polish, four Hungarian and four Australian.
- The MICGP is evolving as planned. It currently comprises four modules which must be passed independently. These are the SBA (single best answer) AKT (applied knowledge test), MEQ (modified essay question) and the oral exam (which comprises significant structural modifications).
- An information day was held in January 2012 to advise applicants on the recruitment process for GP training in 2012. A large attendance highlighted the interest that young doctors continue to display in training to be a GP.

THE FUTURE

Like every other aspect of Irish life, GP training has been affected by the dramatic recent changes in the economic environment. The ICGP is committed to maintaining standards in GP training which are the result of work done by many generations of trainers and programme directors and their teams. This requires resources. However, in return for investment in this, albeit in a difficult time, the reward in terms of well educated and committed GPs is enormous.

The standard of young GPs being trained by Irish training programmes is excellent. I am constantly impressed by the quality of the graduate emerging after four years of training.

It is my earnest wish that Ireland continues to benefit from the excellence of our young colleagues and that the graduates are not all leaving these shores to bring the benefits of their excellent training elsewhere.

IN CONCLUSION

It is my very pleasant duty to record the grateful thanks from the entire committee to Martina McDonnell for her tireless work as administrator.

I am also grateful to Dermot Folan, our new CEO Kieran Ryan, and Dr Gerry Mansfield, National Director of Specialist Training, who provide excellent support to me personally in my role as chair, and to the PGTC generally. I also wish to record my own thanks to all colleagues for their work and commitment to the various subcommittees which are such an important part of the PGTC. With the increased demands on their time and resources, it is extremely gratifying to see the consistent flow of GPs willing to give up their time for the benefit of all.

Specialist Training in General Practice Report

**AUTHOR | DR GERRY MANSFIELD, NATIONAL
DIRECTOR OF SPECIALIST TRAINING IN
GENERAL PRACTICE**



SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME

The national director of specialist training in general practice occupies a senior strategic and operational role with overall responsibility for the delivery and standards of GP training at the ICGP. Leadership and the coordination of all activities are pivotal to this position. The director supports and advises the main stakeholders involved in Irish GP training, namely the National Association of Programme Directors (NAPD), the National Association of GP Trainers (NATGP) and the National Association of GP Trainees (NAGPT), the staff and steering committees of GP training programmes, the ICGP Assessors Group and the MICGP examiners. National conferences are organised for existing and new GP trainers and for GP trainees. Liaison with external regional, national and international groups involved with training for general practice is also undertaken.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Following the expansion of GP training places, there have been a number of logistical challenges to overcome. The reconfiguration of programme directing teams without additional resources has been tackled with great determination by those involved. The relatively recent formation of the North Dublin inner city training programme has been successful and continues to evolve under the directorship of Dr Austin O'Carroll. The struggle to determine NCHD rotations, primarily in paediatrics remained an issue from my report last year. This culminated in communications to the CEO of the HSE and finally the last remaining rotation was confirmed, in no small part due to the individual herself and the national GP trainee representatives. This has been a challenge for the HSE/MET unit which they have overcome. As part of this expansion, additional GP trainers were required. Recruitment has taken place and they have been welcomed into the GP training community. Local trainers workshops, the ICGP New Trainers Workshop in late 2011 and the National Trainers Conference in Lyrath Estate in February of this year, have highlighted the needs of the new trainers. The College gathered feedback from questionnaires at the national conference both on new and existing trainers' learning/teaching needs. The GP training unit provides accessible support at all times and we are redesigning the GP training presence on the ICGP website as a core element of educational support.

These and other issues have been influenced by the HSE primary care services calling together a Service Level Agreement (SLA) Obstacle Identification Group in 2010. Mr Brian Murphy (HSE) chaired this group comprised of representatives of the HSE RDO and HSE MET, the ICGP head of quality and standards, the national director of GP training, and four members of NAPD on behalf of the ICGP. This group outlined the main obstacles facing both the ICGP and HSE in their need to form an SLA for the provision of GP training. The progress on this issue has been minimal to date and the next step rests with the HSE. There has been no formal invitation to the ICGP to begin the process of realising such an SLA.

The 2010 Medical Council Accreditation standards for postgraduate training and education have required the ICGP to reflect and review all aspects of existing general practice training and education. The College is required to submit significant documentation and will receive an accreditation visit in the coming months. Dr Margaret O'Riordan, the members of the GP training unit and I are engaged in preparatory efforts, supporting the Post Graduate Training Committee. The latter has recognised the need for greater centralised documentation of good local GP training programme processes. There are also a number of areas requiring development and the symbiotic relationship with the Forum of Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies will assist our comprehensive address of these issues.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Courses/Conferences:

- Organisation, presentation NAGPT, Galway, 6-7 October 2011.
- Q&A NAPD, Galway, 5 October 2011.
- Presentation, ICGP Winter Meeting, Athlone, 26 November 2011.
- Organisation and presentation, New Trainers Workshop, ICGP, 13 December 2011.
- ICGP Information session for applicants to GP training, ICGP, 7 January 2012.
- Organisation of and participation in NATGP, Kilkenny, 9-10 February 2012.

Committees

- ICGP PGTC Member.
 - ICGP Curriculum Development Committee Member.
 - ICGP Examination Development Committee Member.
 - NAPD Executive Committee Member.
 - Member of the Forum of Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies.
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Additional Presentations

- Annual Manne Berber Lecture, Trinity College, 7 July 2011.
- 'Human Elements of Partnership Agreements', ICGP/NEGs Winter Meeting.
- 'Principles of Adult Learning', advanced contraception tutors prep course, ICGP Summer School, June 2011.
- 'What we Bring', UCD medical undergraduate placement tutors, resource day, Belfield, March 2012.
- 'Assessment in GP Training', co-presented with Dr Margaret O'Riordan, Trinity GP Training Programme Trainers Workshop, March 2012.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES

The last year has seen the recognition of the expanding requirements upon the ICGP with regard to GP training related issues. A GP training unit or team has come together with increased administrative resources and is coordinated by me. Ms Martina McDonnell manages the team in addition to her project development role. She has recently joined the other managers of Irish postgraduate training bodies in formal meetings representing the ICGP. Ms Pauline Tierney and Ms Janet Stafford also have development and research project responsibilities. They provide comprehensive, high quality administrative support to all members of the GP training community.
