

For contributions to the 'News and notes' column, please contact Dr James G. Strachan, Consultant Psychiatrist and Honorary Senior Lecturer, University of Edinburgh, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Edinburgh EH10 5HF, UK, email james.strachan@lpct.scot.nhs.uk

2006 annual reports of the International Divisions

African Division

Discussions in the past year have centred on development and training projects and assistance to the region. The annual general meeting (AGM) in Glasgow of African-based psychiatrists was an opportunity for interchange of ideas. Discussion included the overseas volunteer scheme of the College and its potential benefits to the host communities. Processes to increase the momentum of research in Africa were explored. The Division is seeking to network internationally as well as to continue building bridges within Africa and to contact African psychiatrists presently practising in the UK. The first newsletter was distributed in January.

An important meeting for psychiatry in Africa was the Regional Congress of the World Psychiatric Association in March 2007 in Nairobi. Plans for 2007 include an Edinburgh meeting session on 'Innovation in the management of mental health: social-cultural and economic realities in Africa', as well as an annual general meeting of the Division. The focus this year will be on recruitment to membership. The Division is a particularly small one, with only 50 members. The introduction of 'friend of the International Division' category allows inclusion of psychiatrists from Africa now resident in the UK. Their involvement would strengthen and support the Division and is to be encouraged.

Professor Tuviah Zabow

European Division

The Division organised a symposium at the 19th Pan-Hellenic Congress of Psychiatry in Athens, Greece, 4–8 May 2006 ('The European Division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Activities and Perspectives') and the session at the College annual meeting in Glasgow on 10 July 2006 ('Psychiatric Education in Europe').

Plans for 2007 include:

- a workshop within the framework of the Association of European Psychiatrists Congress, Madrid, Spain, 17–21 March 2007 ('Problems in the Provision of Psychiatric Services in Europe')
- a symposium on 'Competency-Based Assessments', organised jointly by the European Division and the Psychiatric Trainees' Committee at the College annual meeting, Edinburgh, 19–22 June 2007
- a symposium in the framework of the First East European Congress of Psychiatry, Thessaloniki, Greece, 21–23 September 2007.

The Division will continue its involvement in educational activities and its participation in international conferences, with emphasis on activities concerning the area of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Close collaboration has been

established with the Psychiatric Association for Eastern Europe and the Balkans, which holds its first Congress in September 2007, which will feature such topics as the organisation of community services and ethics.

Professor George Christodoulou

Middle Eastern Division

The Division's activities in 2006 included:

- facilitation of the accreditation visit by the College to the Cairo scheme
 - organisation of a session at the College's annual meeting in Glasgow
 - facilitating and encouraging the attendance of trainees from the Middle East at the annual meeting of the College in Glasgow
 - participation in the session organised by the College Pan-American Division at the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association held in Toronto in May ('Sudanese Refugees: Sufferings and Suggested Management')
 - cooperation with the Overseas Doctors Training Committee of the College in the training of Palestinian doctors in the diagnosis and management of addiction, Cairo, September 2006
 - organising training for psychiatrists from Iraq on the management of addictions, Cairo, July 2006.
- Activities planned for 2007 include:
- the session at the College annual meeting in Edinburgh
 - the Middle East regional meeting of the College in Beirut in March, rescheduled from November 2006 because of the armed conflict in the area at the time, with the theme of cross-cultural psychiatry
 - sponsoring of one or two trainees from the Middle East to attend the College annual meeting in Edinburgh
 - implementation of the recommendations of the accreditation committee of the College for the three hospitals that were visited in Cairo in 2006.

Dr Nasser Loza

South Asian Division

The Division's focus in 2006 was on preparations for the international conference in Lahore, Pakistan, on 15–19 February 2007. Delegates came from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, Bhutan, Malaysia, Brunei and Japan. The conference included a session with senior officers of the College, including the President and the Director of International Affairs.

The first South Asian Division meeting will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This will be the first meeting of its kind and there are plans to hold such annual meetings in each member country of the South Asian Division.

The Division hopes to develop programmes in continuing medical education, refresher courses for general practitioners and collaborative research and scholar exchange programmes.

Professor S. Haroon Ahmed

Western Pacific Division

The Division organised a symposium in collaboration with the South East Asian Division at the College annual meeting in Glasgow in July 2006, entitled 'Improving the Capacity of Primary Health Care Workers to Identify Mental Health Problems'. The Division intends to hold meetings in collaboration with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) and the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists in coming years.

The Division carried out a survey using a questionnaire mailed to all members of the College in the Western Pacific Division. Those who responded were supportive of suggestions relating to training and research.

The Division is preparing a symposium at the College annual meeting in Edinburgh in collaboration with the South Asian Division, entitled 'Psychosocial Rehabilitation'. There are also plans to collaborate with the RANZCP to prepare a symposium on 'Training Opportunities to Improve Mental Health in the Western Pacific Region – Win-Win Prospects'.

Professor Scott Henderson

WPA's Section on Psychiatry in Developing Countries

The World Psychiatric Association's Section on Psychiatry in Developing Countries organised an international meeting in Lahore, 15–19 February 2007, that attracted more than 450 delegates (200 from overseas and 250 from Pakistan). The Royal College of Psychiatrists was represented by its President, Director of International Affairs and the chairs of the South Asian, European and Eastern Mediterranean International Divisions, as well as the Secretary of the Western Pacific Division and a representative of the African International Division. This was the first time that the Board of International Affairs had organised a joint session of its five Divisions at an international meeting outside the UK. The South Asian Division was actively involved in the scientific programme.

The College President's visit to earthquake-affected areas was a particularly important event. Meetings were held with a number of officials from the Pakistan Ministry of Health and representatives from several medical universities to discuss the College's support, collaboration and assistance. Interest was shown by the officials of Ministry of Health in the College Volunteers Programme and it was agreed that the College should have close liaison with the Ministry of Health and local psychiatric institutions to initiate further plans.

Dr Afzal Javed

Report on current themes in child and adolescent psychiatry

A one-day seminar held on 22 January 2007 at the Paediatric Department of Ram Krishna Mission Seva Prathisthan, Vivekananda Institute of Medical Sciences, Kolkata, India, was the third in a series of workshops on child and adolescent psychiatry. Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, intellectual disabilities and the developmental disorders were addressed, with an overarching theme of the links between child psychiatry, paediatrics and psychology. The aim was to increase

awareness of the advances in child and adolescent psychiatry among a multidisciplinary audience. Feedback was positive, and there was a request for a repeat event with emphasis on local services.

The Asian Federation of Psychiatric Associations

The Asian Federation of Psychiatric Associations (AFPA) was inaugurated during the WPA's Section on Psychiatry in Developing Countries on 17 February 2007. The President is Professor N. Shinfuku, Japan; the Secretary General is Dr A. Javed; and assisting them are Dr R. I. D'Souza, Australia, and Professor Yang, Taiwan. The AFPA is made up of psychiatric associations from Asia, the South Asian Forum on Mental Health and Psychiatry, the SAARC Psychiatric Federation, the ASEAN Federation on Psychiatry and Mental Health, and the East Asian Group of Psychiatric Associations. Together they represent over 30 psychiatric associations determined to improve psychiatry in the world's largest continent. There are over 30 000 psychiatrists in Asia serving over 3 billion people (half the world's population).

All psychiatrists of Asian origin are welcome to contact the AFPA to find out how they can be involved in the adventure of advancing Asian psychiatry. Please contact Professor Shinfuku (email shinfuku@seinan-gu.ac.jp), Dr Afzal Javed (email afzal@afzaljaved.co.uk), Dr Russell D'Souza (email rsouza1@bigpond.net.au) or Professor Yang (email m750141@ksts.seed.net.tw) for further information. I wish to thank all those who contributed to the birth of the AFPA and wish its new officers all success.

Professor M. P. Deva

Medical student bursaries 2008

The Psychiatric Trainees Committee and the Board of International Affairs are pleased to offer bursaries for medical students looking for financial support with their electives in psychiatry or to undertake research in the UK or overseas.

The bursaries are offered for:

- an elective in psychiatry (five bursaries a year of up to £1200 each)
- a period of research on a psychiatry-related topic (three bursaries a year of up to £1200 each)
- a research presentation (three bursaries a year of £100 each for UK submissions or £150 each for submissions from abroad).

The bursaries are open to undergraduate medical students enrolled on a full-time course of studies in medicine at a medical school in the UK or Ireland. The bursaries are intended to cover costs (travel, accommodation, etc.) to further study or to widen academic research skills. Applicants should submit an essay or a written proposal of the elective or research project (no more than 1500 words), their CV, the names of two referees, confirmation of enrolment at a medical school and an approval of their elective or research project. Applications for 2008 should be submitted to the Dean before the end of February 2008. For further information please contact Lee Jordan on ljordan@rcpsych.ac.uk.

Dr Amit Malik, Chair of Psychiatric Trainees Committee
Prof Hamid Ghodse, Director of International Affairs