

Dear Member,

This issue of Newsletter No. 8 commemorates our recent one-day meeting on 'The Place of Spirituality in Psychiatry on May 14<sup>th</sup> at the Royal Society of Medicine, which was held jointly with the psychiatry section of the RSM. 75 people attended and the feedback received has been very positive. We are encouraged to beginning planning for further such open meetings for 2003.

All the speakers have been kind enough to make their texts, or synopses of their presentations, available for this newsletter and we thank them for their generosity. Also our thanks to Michaela Von Britzke for her conference report.

In the last newsletter, we recorded with sorrow the sudden and untimely passing Professor David Larson, President of the International Centre for the Integration of Health and Spirituality (<http://www.icihs.org>). Dave Larson was a leading figure in research into the correlation of physical and mental health and spirituality/religion, having been a senior researcher at NIH and NIMH and adjunct professor at Duke University and Northwestern University Medical School, Chicago. In this Newsletter, and with the generous support of his publishers and co-authors, Mrs. Susan Larson and Professor Harold Koenig, we include one of Professor Larson's last papers, 'The Patient's Spiritual/Religious Dimension: A Forgotten Factor in Mental Health', published November last in *Directions in Psychiatry*. (See also Professor Larson's Special Guest Contributions in Newsletters Nos. 5 and 6).

Drawing on the work of Dr. Larson and other current research in the field, the SIG has submitted its proposed amendments to the draft CCST Competencies in Psychiatry document currently going through the College and is finalising its submission for the College revision of the curriculum for Basic Specialist Training and the MRCPsych. examination, to be carried out early next year.

An area that we would like to see strengthened is the link between Mental Health Services and interdenominational chaplaincy. The article by Rev. Dr. Stuart Johnson provides much needed information in this area. Many psychiatrists are unaware of the potential for greater collaboration with chaplaincy and we know from service user reports that such liaison is greatly valued when it is made available.

Another creative initiative bringing spirituality into the front line of health care is reported by Jill Stevenson. It is remarkable what can be achieved with minimal resource through one person's enthusiasm and clarity of vision!

The interview with Dr. Larry Culliford is a chance to get to know the author of 'The Little Book of Bliss', 'The Little Book of Happiness' and 'Happiness - The 30 Day Guide' (Rider Books, London) – written under the pen name of Patrick Whiteside.

With best wishes,  
Andrew Powell