

**THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS
PERINATAL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP**

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/college/sig/peri.htm



Newsletter 3

Spring 2004

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☆☆☆ **STOP PRESS: THIRD ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING, 22 OCTOBER 2004** ☆☆☆

Chair's Report

At long last – success. We have come of age and are now a Section. It has taken 20 years. It was Professor John Cox who, as Dean, proposed that we should form a Perinatal Special Interest Group and then, when President, that we should become a Section. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the late Professor Channi Kumar, the first Chairman of the Perinatal Special Interest Group. However, it was the Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths, followed by the enquiry into the death of Daksha Emson, that provided the final impetus, together with the skill and support of our current President, Mike Shooter. This is of course only the beginning. We now have to work with the Dean to look at the membership curriculum, basic and higher training requirements, and with the Registrar, to look at consultant job descriptions and interviews.

The next CEMD will be published on the 12 November 2004. The Children and Maternity NSF is due out soon. These two, will hopefully underline the importance of our speciality and the need for specialist services for all women, not just the fortunate few. National standards and pathways to care will be next. Over the next 3 years, we need to work with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives to develop joint training needs for perinatal mental health and I'm sure that there will be very many more tasks than this.

We are now notifying all section executive members when stakeholder documents are returned for comment. The time frame for returning comments is usually too short for us to come up with a consensus view, so the easiest thing to do is for members as individuals to respond as they see fit. In the past we have had considerable success in modifying the final published documents in

the light of our views. A number of the section members were also present at the stakeholder meeting for the new NICE Guidelines for the management of perinatal mental health problems held on the 24 May 2004 in London.

The new executive committee and office bearers have now been elected and are the old suspects. This probably is an advantage in the short term for ensuring continuity but hopefully, over the next few years, new and enthusiastic members will gradually replace us all.

Thank you to everybody for all the effort that you have put in over the last few months and welcome to the Perinatal Psychiatry Section of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Margaret Oates, Chair

From Professor John Cox

A new Royal College of Psychiatrists Section is being inaugurated at last! This is indeed a wholesome and hopeful moment for families struggling with disadvantage, depression and young children. Now, however, the work begins and we have to deliver, working with Governments, a Perinatal Mental Health Strategy. It is also crucially important to train the next generation of Consultants in Perinatal Mental Health and to persevere with the search for neuroendocrine triggers of postnatal onset disorders, as well as evaluation of Perinatal Services.

It is to be hoped that the Section will form powerful alliances with other Sections and Faculties in the College as well as User groups. There is now an opportunity to work again with my other college (RCOG) to produce joint recommendations for training and service delivery. After the false start there is no shame in going back to the starting posts again. I hope too that our Section will contribute to international psychiatry by supporting and complimenting the Marcé Society and establishing a section of Perinatal Psychiatry within the World Psychiatric Association. The new executive may be well advised to take as its starting point the disadvantaged in Great Britain and Ireland, yet also the needs of colleagues from economically poor countries. Of course, from a personal perspective, I am delighted that this Section, advocated when I was in office at the College, has now emerged.

Good luck to our new officers.

John Cox

Section Status

As mentioned in the Chair's report, the SIG is due to become a Section of the College in July of this year. The arguments for change of status, which were put forward to – and accepted by – the College, are enclosed with this newsletter. The change will formally occur during the Annual College Meeting and the new Section is hoping to hold an informal reception to mark the event. Change to Section status isn't just about a name. Sections, like Faculties, gain particular advantages within the College such as administrative support and meeting organisation. Section chairs sit on a number of College committees and therefore have an opportunity to reflect members' views more directly and to influence College policy in areas such as training and service development. Obviously, there are responsibilities with the job as well! The new Section must display a sufficient level of activity to justify the increased recognition of Perinatal Psychiatry as a distinct speciality.

The first change most of you will already have noticed is that nomination papers were circulated for elections to the new Section Executive Committee. At close of nominations, the number submitted did not exceed the number of places and so no ballot was required. The new Section Executive will meet for the first time at the College Annual Meeting.

, Secretary & Newsletter Editor (r.cantwell@clinemd.gla.ac.uk)

Third Annual Scientific Meeting

With the move to Section status, it has been decided to postpone the usual Spring conference until the Autumn. The date for your diaries is **Friday 22nd October 2004** – once again in Manchester. Already the day is shaping up to be as challenging and interesting as last year's, with a session on social adversity in the morning and one on substance misuse in the afternoon. Following the very successful debate in 2003, we hope to repeat this again to round off the day. As this will be the first meeting of the new Section, we anticipate a good attendance. We will also host the first Business Meeting of the Section on the same day – with hopefully a lively discussion on what priorities we address as a section. Registration forms will be sent out to members in the near future. Please check the website for updates.

Annual College Meeting 2004

The SIG has organised a session at Harrogate entitled 'Drug Treatment in Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women', to be held on **Thursday 8th July at 10.30am**. The evidence base for psychotropic prescribing will be presented, along with good practice guidance and results from surveys of current practice. Professor John Cox will chair the session. More information on the College website.

Biennial Marcé Society Conference 2004

This year Oxford is hosting the Biennial Marcé Society Conference. The meeting will run over 4 days from **23rd to 26th September 2004**. The meeting offers an excellent opportunity to meet colleagues from a variety of professional backgrounds and countries, and to hear about latest research in perinatal mental health. In addition, the UK & Ireland Branch (UKIMS) will hold a day meeting at the same venue on the first day (23rd September). Further information is available at www.marcesociety.com.

Summer Travelling Circus

The next travelling circus will be held on **Thursday 24th June 2004** at the Bethlem Royal Hospital. It is being organised by Dr Veronica O'Keane and David Weir. Further information can be obtained from them at Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3BX. The theme of the day will be 'Severe Mental Illness'.

These informal gatherings have proved invaluable to those involved in running services, and usually consist of information sharing on clinical issues, some educational content, and usually, an opportunity to visit the local mother & baby unit. No charge is made for the day and staff from all disciplines involved in running specialist perinatal services are welcome.

Service Profile

Southampton & New Forest

The Southampton and New Forest Perinatal Mental Health Service provides specialist community assessment and treatment of pregnant and postnatal women with severe mental health problems. Referrals come from primary and secondary care and patients are often jointly managed with local CMHTs. The team includes 1 Consultant (0.6) and 1 Specialist Register (1.0) in psychiatry, 2 CPNs, a Consultant Psychologist (0.4) and 1 Secretary. The service has to cover a wide geographical area but manages to carry out almost all assessments and follow-up visits within the patient's own home. We prioritise prediction and prevention of psychosis, care of women with severe illnesses and support/advice to other professionals. Inpatient care is purchased from the team's budget from a neighbouring private mother and baby unit but with consultant cover provided by the NHS Consultant and closely shared care with the community nurses.

Although a small team, we try hard to maintain a multidisciplinary approach and place a high level of importance on team training and professional development. Recent service developments have included participation in a DoH pilot of telephone support groups for women with postnatal depression in rural areas, the provision of support and supervision to a group addressing parenting issues with women who suffer severe mental illness, and the introduction of video recording and feedback of mother/infant interaction to be used as an aid to clinical management.

Problems for the team include overcrowded accommodation and poorly networked computers! Despite this, the team dealt with 285 referrals in the last year audited, with only 21 women requiring admission. We try to provide urgent responses and intensive home treatment in the community whenever necessary to prevent or shorten admission. For the future, we hope to be able to expand the team to include a nursery nurse to build on the use of mother/infant interaction videos and telephone support groups, and gradually expand the catchment area which can access our services.

Alain Gregoire

News & Local Developments

If you have any information about what's happening in your areas – new service developments, innovative practice, local meetings etc., please write to/email the Editor.

- The Scottish Executive has recently published guidelines to assist commissioners, planners, service partners and staff to agree approaches for the organisation of accommodation, services and support to allow mothers suffering from a perinatal mental illness to be admitted to hospital accompanied by their child (www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sehd/mels/HDL2004_06.pdf). For Scotland, this is a detailed response to the requirement in new mental health legislation that appropriate facilities must be available to admit mothers with their babies where the mother is suffering from a mental illness.
- The London and South Thames Clinical Network in Perinatal Psychiatry is holding a conference on Developing Services for Pregnant and Postnatal Women with Mental Health Problems, on **29th June 2004** at the Institute of Psychiatry, London. More

information can be had from Elizabeth Best (elizabeth.best@slam.nhs.uk), Maureen Marks (m.marks@iop.kcl.ac.uk) or Liz McDonald (liz.mcdonald@elcmht.nhs.uk).

Publications and Websites of Interest

RCPsych CR88: Perinatal Mental Health Services – Recommendations for provision of services for childbearing women (www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/cr/cr88.htm)

RCPsych CR105: Patients as Parents – Addressing the needs, including the safety, of children whose parents have mental illness (www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/cr/cr105.htm)

Why Mothers Die – Report of the Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths (www.cemach.org.uk/publications.htm)

SIGN Guideline 60: Postnatal Depression and Puerperal Psychosis (www.sign.ac.uk/)

DOH Women's Mental Health Strategy (www.doh.gov.uk/mentalhealth/women.htm)

A Framework for Maternity Services in Scotland (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/health/ffms-00.asp>)

International Marcé Society (www.marcesociety.com/)

London Regional Perinatal Network (www.londondevelopmentcentre.org)

Framework for Mental Health Services in Scotland: Perinatal Mental Illness / Postnatal Depression Hospital Admission and Support Services (www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sehd/mels/HDL2004_06.pdf)

SIG Executive Committee Members

Margaret Oates, Nottingham (Chair)
Angelika Wieck, Manchester (Financial Officer)
John Cox, Stoke-on-Trent
Carol Henshaw, Keele
Sarah Oke, Bristol
Trudi Seneviratne, London
Sue Smith, Cardiff

Roch Cantwell, Glasgow (Secretary)
Jackie Benjamin, London
Alain Gregoire, Southampton
Liz McDonald, London
Veronica O'Keane, London
Neelam Sisodia, Nottingham
Angela Walsh, Newcastle