

Annual Report 2004/2005

Royal College of Psychiatrists' Special Interest Group in Neuropsychiatry

The Neuropsychiatry Special Interest Group has had another busy year. We are continuing our work supporting national service development in neuropsychiatry. As part of this project we held, last September, a well attended one day conference that included speakers not only from the field of neuropsychiatry but also from the Department of Health, clinical neurosciences management and neurology. A number of initiatives that were developed at this conference are already being made use of by members of the Special Interest Group and we are preparing a document for submission to various parties including the Department of Health where it will be used to support appropriate models of specialist commissioning relevant to the setting up of neuropsychiatry services. In order to provide a firm evidence base against which further developments in neuropsychiatry can be made, the Special Interest Group has also undertaken a detailed survey of the current disposition of clinical neuropsychiatry across the country.

We are also continuing to develop training in clinical neuropsychiatry. This activity is being pursued at several levels. The Special Interest Group is contributing topics to the Royal College's new on-line CPD curriculum. With respect to junior doctor training the Neuropsychiatry Special Interest Group has for the past year been represented on the Joint Neuroscience Council where we have contributed to a model of cross-specialty basic neuroscience training that would be available to doctors at SHO level who were intending a career in clinical neuroscience. This initiative is currently being considered by a number of the Royal Colleges in discussion with the Joint Neuroscience Council. We are also continuing to make available training in neuropsychiatry-related issues to the wider body of consultant psychiatrists and psychiatrists in training. To this end we have developed two sessions on functional neurological disorders to be held at this year's Royal College Annual General Meeting in Edinburgh. With respect to higher specialist training in neuropsychiatry, we are also continuing to develop and disseminate the training recommendations outlined in our Core Competencies in Neuropsychiatry document. This document, developed by the Neuropsychiatry Special Interest Group, has also been submitted to the International Neuropsychiatric Association which is attempting to develop an international curriculum for neuropsychiatry. The Special Interest Group's curriculum is one of only a very small number that have been developed so far and should make an important contribution to this international effort.

Within psychiatric practice there is the potential for overlap between neuropsychiatry and liaison psychiatry. The Special Interest Group in Neuropsychiatry has now started to address actively this overlap by setting up, with the Faculty of Liaison Psychiatry, a joint working group that will initially have the aims of providing joint advice on documents and policy that have relevance for both groups, developing a cooperative approach to service development, providing complimentary inputs to the development of training curricula and organising a joint conference (which currently has the

provisional title “Neuropsychiatry and Liaison Psychiatry: A Meeting of Minds”). The Neuropsychiatry Special Interest Group also maintains close liaison with the cross-specialty, academically focussed British Neuropsychiatry Association and a member of the Special Interest Group executive sits on the Executive Committee of the BNPA, contributing a Special Interest Group perspective to the BNPA’s discussions and plans.

Neuropsychiatry is itself a field comprising several subspecialties. The specialist subgroups in Acquired Brain Injury, Epilepsy, Huntingdon’s Disease and Sleep Disorders have themselves been active, providing national forums in which often geographically isolated practitioners can come together to discuss a range of clinical problems and initiatives.

Finally, members of the Group have acted as representatives, giving a neuropsychiatry perspective, to a range of national bodies including NICE and National Service Framework groups.

In summary, over the past year the Special Interest Group has been actively involved in training at junior and senior doctor level, developing strategies to support national service development in neuropsychiatry and liaising with clinical groups within psychiatry and other clinical neurosciences, as well as internationally. These initiatives are all ongoing and we anticipate that with better definition of the clinical content of neuropsychiatry, further development of clinical neuropsychiatry services and our role in neuropsychiatry education both within and beyond the subspecialty, that the Special Interest Group will continue becoming increasingly active year on year.