

RCPsych International

The International eNewsletter



Welcome



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Professor Mohammed Al-Uzri

Dear Colleagues

I hope that the first months of 2023 have been kind to you. It has been a busy start to the year for the College as you'll read from all the updates featured in this edition.

Our thoughts, as always, are with those affected by tragic disasters, both ongoing and unfolding, and I send my condolences to those impacted. Please do use and share the resources available on the College website to support those affected by humanitarian emergencies.

I would like to express my congratulations to Dr Lade Smith CBE, who will take up the role of RCPsych President on 11 July 2023, after the highest College Presidential election turnout for some time. Dr Adrian James' commitment to international work continues in his final months as President. Most recently Dr James represented the College at the Ukrainian Psychiatric Association's annual conference as well as the WPA Thematic Conference in Pakistan.

In this edition, I am delighted to share an introduction from Dr Ananta Dave, Chair of the Diaspora Groups Committee, and Chief Medical Officer at the Black Country Integrated Care Board, UK. Dr Dave has chaired the Diaspora Groups Committee since 2020 and I was fortunate to join her and colleagues last month, to celebrate some of the successes of the committee and the inspiring work of its member diaspora groups.

As always, you will find updates from our International Divisions, with many exciting

events and meetings to report on. You can also read introductions from Dr Hany Shaltout, Financial Officer of the Pan-American Division, and Dr Olufisayo Adesokun, co-opted Financial Officer of the African Division.

I am pleased to share the account of former MTI trainee Dr Malsha Gunathilake, who reports on her experience of moving to the UK to train in Old Age psychiatry and how she has applied this to her practice in Sri Lanka.

The <u>College's International Congress</u> is always a highlight of the year and a fantastic opportunity to meet and collaborate with colleagues from around the world. It will take place between 10-13 July in Liverpool, UK. Please see page 9 of the newsletter for further information.

I will also be travelling to Doha for the 9th Qatar Annual International Mental Health Conference in May, you can read more about the conference in Dr Ovais Wadoo's Middle Eastern Division update on page 5.

Please let us know if you have any events or news that we can feature in the next edition, to be published in June. You can contact <u>sarah.eldridge@rcpsych.ac.uk</u> with any newsletter related contributions or questions.

I look forward to seeing those of you who are at the 2023 International Congress in July.

Kind regards

Professor Mohammed Al-Uzri

Presidential Lead for International Affairs

Introducing the Diaspora Groups Committee

A warm welcome from the Chair Dr Ananta Dave

I am delighted to be communicating with all of you through the RCPsych International newsletter in my role as Chair of the Diaspora Groups Committee at RCPsych. I was elected as Chair at a very difficult time – we lost our beloved Founding Chair Prof Sab Bhaumik, fondly known as Sab, when he died suddenly in November 2019. Less than 6 months later, the whole world was left reeling under the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown.

As a group, we rallied together -with experienced members supporting the newer ones and I am proud to say that we now have a dynamic, cohesive Committee, very ably administered by Sarah Eldridge with support from Elen Cook and Agnes Raboczki in the International Team. Our membership has grown with an increase in the number of diaspora groups represented, and the collaboration between the College and the Committee has correspondingly increased too.

The breadth of work undertaken by the Committee both within the UK and internationally for the benefit of patient care, to raise awareness of mental health needs and respond to disasters & crises, is indeed commendable.

The support of the College President Dr Adrian James and Prof Mohammed Al-Uzri has been invaluable. Adrian's fearless commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and Mohammed's vision & tireless work in raising the profile of the International Divisions in close association with the diaspora organisations is paying rich dividends. Members of the College now feel more connected & valued and the diaspora members feel that their work is recognised and supported.

Over the last several months, the College's International Affairs Committee and the Diaspora Groups Committee have worked together to support the distressing situations in Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Pakistan and in several countries of the Middle East.

There is much to do in terms of raising awareness of the existence of diaspora organisations, especially amongst IMGs coming to the UK and within the International Divisions of the College. IMGs are the fastest growing group of doctors within psychiatry and the global interconnected nature of healthcare means that the links between the UK and other countries through our International Divisions are increasingly important. We also need to involve our SAS colleagues many of whom are IMGs, in this work and enable them to develop their full potential.

I would like to finish by highlighting some of the recent positive developments and initiatives by our diaspora group members. It has been an enormous privilege to lead this committee and I hope the flourishing of this group is a fitting tribute to Prof Bhaumik and would bring a beaming smile to his face wherever he is.

- Diaspora Groups Committee celebratory event hosted by the College which was attended by representatives of all member organisations. The event highlighted the work of the Committee and recognised and appreciated the work of each of the diaspora organisations who we're supporting their countries of origin through horrific events, war and natural disasters. Providing MTIs and IMGS with information on the support available through the diaspora groups.
- At the silver jubilee conference of the British Indian Psychiatric Association in October 2022 all the 9 diaspora member organisations of the RCPsych diaspora committee signed a joint statement committing to collaborate via training, education, joint projects in the UK and abroad and supporting IMGs.



Dr Ananta Dave

Updates from the RCPsych International Divisions

African Division

Dr Yvonne Treffurth, co-opted Vice Chair

Our division hosted a meeting on 24th January 2023 as a platform for our members to get to know one another and to discuss the challenges psychiatrists in Africa have been facing.

Psychiatrists from across the continent joined us, including some of our members currently based in the UK. We heard from our past chair, Professor Petrus deVries, about the work the division has been doing over the past three years. This has included hosting a workshop on research skills in child psychiatry in 2020, organising a symposium at the RCPsych conference in 2021 and supporting a project developing sub-specialty training in Ghana. Shortage of specialists in psychiatric subspecialties such as old age, child and adolescent and forensic psychiatry, and the pressing need for improving clinical skills were highlighted. Members also discussed the need to upgrade general psychiatric skills, and to collaborate with existing national and regional associations. Following on from our meeting we will now move forward to develop sub-specialty training programmes in collaboration with sub-specialty divisions at the college.

In other news Dr Adesokun, our finance officer based in Nigeria, reported that the Mental Health Bill has been signed and ratified by the Nigerian president, after several years of collective effort. The bill is a legislative framework that protects the human rights and dignity of affected persons, in accordance with global best practices.

We are looking forward to seeing many African psychiatrists at the International RCPsych conference in Liverpool in July 2023.

South Asian Division

Dr Manoj Kumar, Chair

In the winter edition of this newsletter, I had reported on the revival of activities in the South Asian division. This has continued apace and the highlight has been a webinar on the MRC Psych examinations held on the 25th of February. The meeting was attended by around 80 participants from the South Asian countries and was chaired by Professor Mohammed Al-Uzri, the Presidential Lead for International Affairs. The Dean, Professor Subodh Dave was the main speaker and the other speakers included the former President of the College, Professor Wendy Burn. Lively discussions followed and one of the concerns raised by the attendees was regarding the non-availability of CASC examinations online this year.

Overall, the feedback from the attendees has been overwhelmingly positive. The recording of the webinar is available online and the individual speaker's recordings can be accessed from the Courses menu at the MHAT website at https://mhatkerala.org/

We are already looking forward to the next webinar, the planning of which has begun. Details will be announced shortly.

Earlier, in December a meeting was held to review the activities of the South Asian division, organised by Professor Al-Uzri and his team at the College. We are grateful to all in the International team for their unstinted support.

RCPsych Insight magazine

The latest issue of Insight magazine is now available (accessible via the cover image to the right). It features many fantastic articles, including the following:

- President-Elect Dr Lade Smith CBE discusses her ambitions and priorities as she prepares to take on her new role as leader of RCPsych
- Current President Dr Adrian James provides a platform for discussion on gender identity
- How Pakistan's mental health crisis is set to be tackled with an awareness campaign and national helpline



Updates from the RCPsych International Divisions

Middle Eastern Division

Dr Ovais Wadoo, Chair

I am delighted to report that 2023 started with a succession of impactful regional conferences. Beginning with the Abu Dhabi Integrated Mental Health Conference (20-21 Jan) where the College had the opportunity to meet with local Members and Fellows as well as display some of its newest mental health leaflets at its stand. Following this event, I had the privilege of attending the 2nd Advances in Psychiatry Across Ages (APAA) Conference in Abu Dhabi (28-29 Jan). Here, I was joined by Professor Al-Uzri, Dr Subodh Dave, Dr Mani Krishnan, and RCPsych staff. To take advantage of our gathering, the Middle Eastern Division hosted a small RCPsych Members Reception, which provided opportunity for members to network and make new professional connections. Lastly, with the lead of Dr Subodh Dave, Dean, joined by RCPsych Director of Business Development, Mr Adam Pryce, as well as International Liaison Manager, Ms Agnes Raboczki, the College was represented at Arab Health (30 Jan-2 Feb), which is one of the largest healthcare events in the world, with approximately 90,000 people in attendance. I'm further pleased to share, that at this event the RCPsych signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Abu Dhabi Health Services Company (SEHA) to collaborate on training and education activities in the UAE.



RCPsych members reception, APAA



Prof Mohammed Al-Uzri speaking at the APAA conference, Abu Dhabi

I'd like to take this opportunity to invite you to the 9th Oatar International Mental Health Conference in Doha, Qatar between 25-27 May 2023. The theme of the conference will be Mental Health for all; Innovations, challenges, and spearheading change regionally. I'm proud to say that the RCPsych has come onboard as an official partner of the event, which will be hosted by the Hamad Medical Corporation. The Conference includes one day of intensive workshop sessions followed by two days of plenaries, oral and poster presentations.

We're also happy to see the College's partnership with Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) and the Bethlehem Psychiatric Hospital continue to flourish. A team from Leicestershire Partnership Trust, supported by Dr Hasanen Al-Taiar, Chair of the British Arab Psychiatric Association and Iraq Mental Health Forum, will embark on a fourth RCPsych mission to the West Bank in May 2023. This mission will focus on de-escalation tactics and the development of a set of protocols around agitated patients.

With very best wishes, Dr Ovais Wadoo

Updates from the RCPsych International Divisions

European Division

Dr Angela Carballedo, Chair

The RCPsych European Division had the privilege of jointly organising with the Psychiatry Section of UEMS, a webinar exploring the Effects of COVID-19 on patients with Severe Mental Illness. We were honoured to have among our speakers, psychiatrists of the talent of Prof. Normal Sartorius who discussed the future of Psychiatry, Prof. Brenda Penninx who described how COVID-19 is shaping mental health services nowadays, and Drs Marisa Dias Casanova and Livia de Picker who presented their study on European Covid 19 vaccination strategies for people with severe mental illness. We were delighted to hear Ms Hilkka Karkkainen, President of Gamian Europe, bringing forward the views of service users, and we greatly appreciated Dr Adrian James smoothly moderating the sessions.

Prof. Sartorius told us that since the Second World War mental health programmes and psychiatry have made significant advances. Countries have recognized the magnitude and severity of mental health problems, and numerous national programmes have been launched. Technology relating to the treatment of mental disorders has advanced and significant progress has been made regarding knowledge of brain functioning. The awareness of the need to protect the human rights of those with mental illness has increased and programmes against stigma and discrimination of those with mental illness, have been developed. Associations bringing together those who have experienced mental illness and their relatives, have come into existence in many countries.

While these are great steps forward, Prof. Sartorius stated that more work is necessary to complete these advances. In low/middle-income countries, the vast majority of people with mental disorders do not receive adequate treatment. Even in highly industrialized countries, a third of people with severe forms of mental illness are not receiving the appropriate therapy. Among the new tasks for psychiatry are reforms which will allow for appropriate care of comorbid mental and physical disorders, for prevention in primary care, and for educational reform of psychiatrists and mental health workers.

During her presentation, Prof. Penninx made us aware of how the COVID-19 pandemic threatened global mental

health, both indirectly via disruptive societal changes and directly via neuropsychiatric sequelae after SARS-CoV-2 infection. However, this has not translated into objectively measurable increased rates of mental disorders, self-harm or suicide, suggesting effective resilience and adaptation, but there is substantial heterogeneity among subgroups, and time-lag effects may also exist. With regard to COVID-19, both acute and post-acute neuropsychiatric sequelae have become apparent, with high prevalence of fatigue, cognitive impairments and anxiety and depressive symptoms, even months after infection. To understand how COVID-19 continues to shape mental health in the longer term, fine-grained, well-controlled longitudinal data at the (neuro)biological, individual and societal levels remain essential. Prof. Penninx made reference to the need to prepare for future pandemics, prioritising mental health from the outset to identify and protect those at risk.

Dr. Dias Casanova and Dr. De Picker presented their study on severe mental illness and European COVID-19 vaccination strategies and highlighted to the audience the strong link between severe mental illness and an increased risk COVID-19-related morbidity and mortality. They explained how European countries' vaccination strategies for individuals with severe mental illness were evidencing a disconnect. Most of these patients are treated in the community, and were overlooked by the majority of European COVID-19 vaccination strategies. Dr Marisa Casanova and Dr Livia de Picker recommendations represented professionals, patients, and families, and aimed at correcting the inequality that people with severe mental illness faced.

Ms Hilkka Karkkainen presented two service users' surveys carried out during the Covid 19 pandemic. Relevant points were drawn from the results such as the need for talking therapies and continuation of care highlighted as relevant points to patients. Surveys showed that still much remains to be done to support the mental health of patients and professionals, and while governments across Europe responded to the pandemic and acknowledged its impact, investments to address mental health needs remain more important than ever.

Introducing Dr Olufisayo Adesokun and Dr Hany Shaltout

African Division

Dr Olufisayo Adesokun, co-opted Financial Officer

I am Dr Olufisayo Adesokun, FWACP, a consultant psychiatrist at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. I completed my basic psychiatry training in 2019 and plan to undertake additional specialist training. Currently, I am working as a consultant in consultation/liaison and community mental health services where I engage in clinical service and research, medical education, service development and administration.

In November 2022, I was happy to be co-opted as the interim finance Officer of the African division, where I support the Chair Dr Catherine Mutusya, in moving the work of the division forward. Our priority continues to be increasing members engagement and education. In the near future, and in conjunction with the College, we hope to organise virtual seminars and relevant specialty training for our members to benefit from. Our overall goals are to increase active participation and maximize what the College can offer the members of the African

Division.

Pan-American Division

Dr Hany Shaltout, Financial Officer

It is a great privilege and honor to find myself representing you as your new Financial Officer for the Pan-American Division of the Royal College. As a second generation psychiatrist born in Egypt next to the warm banks of the Nile river and the towering pyramids of Giza. In 2017 I made the decision to immigrate to the New World to build a better life for both myself and my family.

We were welcomed in a small community in rural Alberta, Canada and now call Camrose our home. Through this majestic community my family and I have become integrated with the Canadian way of life and have grown to love it. Today, I am proud to serve my community as the local psychiatrist. I help to develop services through my role as Section Chief of Rural Addictions and Mental Health in Alberta Health Services - Central Zone. I also teach the next generation of Doctors at the University of Alberta as an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry.

I find myself lucky to be here with you all today. The Pan-American Division forms the largest geographical division of the Royal College and just as the Americas is a melting pot of different people, cultures and beliefs so too is our membership with our beautiful mix of professionals, practices and most importantly our people.

Our diversity does come with some interesting challenges especially as regards to member engagements but I am hopeful that in my time serving as your financial officer, we will be able to bridge some of the distance between us and together we can work on making the division support your academic and professional needs and create a sense of community that you would be proud to be a part of.



Dr Olufisayo Adesokun



Dr Hany Shaltout

Medical Training Initiative (MTI)

Dr Malsha Gunathilake MTI experience & return to Sri Lanka

I joined the Medical Training Initiative (MTI) scheme for my mandatory post graduate overseas training as a psychiatrist in Sri Lanka. Positive feedback from my senior colleagues influenced me to choose the MTI scheme. The application process, website and periodic information through emails were informative, clear and straight forward. Following shortlisting, interviews were held in March 2020; just at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. The interview was friendly and well-structured. After being selected, the College supported me by matching my preferences to a nearby Trust, the North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT), as my husband was placed in East-London as a MTI trainee. My husband's supervisors, NELFT officials and the College liaised to organise my placement, which subsequently made things much easier for me as a fresh trainee in the UK with two kids.

After arriving in October 2020 in the middle of the pandemic, I had to quarantine in a hotel. NELFT financially supported all the trainees during quarantine and helped with settling in, as it was a chaotic time with a national lockdown. The HR department helped with document work to open bank accounts and lease agreements.



Dr Malsha Gunathilake

My first placement was in an older adult community mental health team and a memory clinic in Havering. Acclimatising to working in NHS was initially challenging due to differences in systems, culture and the language barrier. The Trust provided adequate guidance and support through my supervisor and the team so that after one month, I felt more confident and comfortable.

The UK has five different types of older adult mental health services; memory service, community mental health service, liaison service, home treatment service and in- patient service. I was lucky to have experience in all five services within the Trust during my rotation. I learnt about the service structure, novel non- pharmacological strategies for people with dementia and support for their families. Working with different teams helped improve my skills too.

I could also complete all three parts of MRCPsych examinations during my training to obtain the College membership. The guidance and support by the seniors and medical education unit was tremendous. I also had opportunity to do audits, quality improvement projects and contributed to a book chapter.

After successfully completing MTI training, I returned to Sri Lanka in October 2022. As I am one of the first Old Age Psychiatrists in the country, I bare the challenge of developing services for elderly people. During the last 3 months, I have established a dedicated memory clinic and am working on adapting cognitive stimulation therapy (CST) to Sri Lanka, liaising with the CST team in the UK. I am hoping to develop further services incorporating my UK experience.

According to the prospectus in Sri Lanka, I need to have 2 years of Old Age psychiatry training in UK, Initially I got it confirmed for 1 year, however with discussions I could complete 2 years in old age psychiatry. If this uncertainty was sorted at the outset for subspecialty trainees, it could have been better.

I want to thank the RCPsych MTI team, NELFT and all my supervisors for their immense support to make my MTI career a success. I highly recommend MTI training and NELFT for prospective trainees and I wish them good luck!

Featured project

Susannah Grant, Head of Exams at RCPsych, reports on the College's work with Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)

The College has been working with Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) to support mental health services in Palestine. The College has previously completed two successful missions to the West Bank and worked on a variety of projects relating to ECT, patient safety guidelines, supervision and strategy development. This partnership identified a need for development of the existing postgraduate psychiatry exams in Palestine.

In December 2022 a College delegation travelled to the West Bank for a four day mission to deliver an exams workshop, present the draft child and adolescent mental health strategy and review policies and protocols at the Bethlehem Psychiatric Hospital. The delegation consisted of Dr Vivek Agarwal, CASC Panel Chair, Dr Nadia Dabbagh, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, and Ms Susannah Grant, Head of Examinations.

Dr Agarwal and Ms Grant delivered a two day workshop in Ramallah covering best practice in assessment. The workshop was well attended with representatives from the Psychiatry Specialty Committee, Bethlehem Hospital, and psychiatrists from Nablus and Jenin. Also in attendance were senior leaders from cardiology, orthopaedics, orthodontics and urology, as well as the Director General of the Palestinian Medical Council (PMC), who were all there to learn more about OSCE assessment. The delegates were very well engaged and there were a number of useful discussions about how the principles discussed could be applied locally.

At a meeting at the Ministry of Health in Ramallah - attended by representatives from the Ministry, NGOs and MAP- Dr Dabbagh presented the second draft of the child and adolescent mental health strategy 2023 – 2028, 'Every child deserves a childhood, every child deserves a future'. There was positive and constructive feedback which would be incorporated into the final version.

On the last day of the mission, Dr Dabbagh and Ms Grant visited the Bethlehem Psychiatric Hospital, hosted by Dr Ibrahim Khmayyes and his team. Dr Ibrahim led a tour of part of the hospital and facilitated the observation of an ECT clinic where it was noted that the ECT protocol introduced by Dr Braithwaite in the summer has had a positive impact. Dr Dabbagh also led a meeting to discuss policies and protocols at the Hospital, identifying gaps and suggesting developments for existing policies.

It was a true pleasure to support this project and I extend my thanks to the team at MAP for their support and warm hospitality, and to all the psychiatry specialists and residents who took part in the workshop and meetings. I'd also like to thank Prof Al-Uzri and Ms Raboczki for the introduction, support and collaboration.

Translations of RCPsych mental health information resources

For many years, College members have kindly volunteered to translate RCPsych mental health information resources for patients and carers, resulting in over 300 translations in 29 languages. The College is now working with Translators Without Boarders, part of a non-profit organisation called CLEAR Global, and their network of more than 100,000 language volunteers. This will allow us to update the translations of selected RCPsych information resources, in the 25 most indemand languages.

As part of the College's response to international disasters, there is a <u>dedicated area of our website</u> which includes open access to resources translated into languages relevant to current international emergencies. This includes information resources translated into Arabic, Russian, Sindhu, Turkish, Kurdish Ukrainian and Urdu. We are pleased to confirm that we have been able to expand our Ukrainian translation offerings, due to funds generously donated by the RCPsych Forensic Faculty for this purpose, to support the work of colleagues in the Ukrainian Psychiatric Association. You can now find <u>the following additional information resources on our website in Ukrainian</u>: Bereavement, Anorexia and bulimia, Depression in adults and Self-harm. We hope these resources will be useful to Ukrainians during such an incredibly challenging time.

RCPsych International Congress 2023

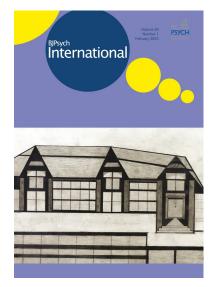
This year's <u>International Congress</u> is taking place in Liverpool, England from 10-13 July.

There is a fantastic line up of keynote speakers from across the world including Sir Robin Murray, Institute of Psychiatry, London, Professor Kenneth R. Kaufman, Departments of Psychiatry and Neurology, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, New Brunswick, USA; Department of Psychological Medicine, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, Dr Thara Rangaswamy, Vice chair, Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), India and Professor Felice Jacka, Alfred Deakin Professor of Nutritional Psychiatry and Epidemiology.

Early bird rates are available until 23.59 on Friday 31 March 2023, please see the <u>College website for registration details</u>.



BJPsych International journal



The <u>latest issue of BJPsych International</u> focuses on psychiatry in Sri Lanka, with articles on suggested improvements in education and training, the country's outdated legislation regarding involuntary psychiatric treatment, and the misuse of prescription medications. Nagina Khan, Wolfgang Gilliar, J. S. Bamrah and Subodh Dave 's editorial considers whether digital solutions lead to a more equitable global healthcare workforce.

The journal welcomes contributions from all over the world, particularly LMICs – check out why you should consider submitting to BJPsych International and the guidelines for submission.

<u>Muses – the arts blog from BJPsych International</u> welcomes submissions for consideration, such as, comments on artwork, visual arts, literature, drama, films, podcasts, and videos. Do have a look at the <u>instructions for blog authors</u> for details on how to submit.

New CASC format

Following an extensive review of our assessment strategy, the College is announcing changes to the delivery of the CASC examination. Please see the CASC area of the College website for further information.



Events

Upcoming events you may be interested in:

Neurodevelopmental psychiatry Spring conference

Date & time: 12 May 2023, 10am-4.45pm BST

Location: Online, via Zoom

Description: This conference will encompass a range of topics, spanning the breadth of neurodevelopmental psychiatry.

Please see the <u>Neurodevelopmental psychiatry</u> <u>Spring conference programme here.</u>

Find out more >

North West Summer Conference 2023 'Psychopharmacology Masterclass'

Date & time: 23 June 2023, 9.30am-4.00pm BST

Location: Online, via Zoom

Description: During the Psychopharmacology Masterclass, international experts will impart their knowledge about pharmacological management of schizophrenia, unipolar depression, bipolar affective disorder, anxiety disorders and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Find out more >

Keep in contact











Submissions for summer 2023 issue

Please contact Sarah Eldridge at sarah.eldridge@rcpsych.ac.uk with any questions about future submissions, or the newsletter in general.

The deadline for submissions for the summer 2023 edition is 26 May 2023.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is the professional body responsible for education and training, and setting and raising standards in psychiatry.

Our International members are represented by six International Divisions; African, European, Middle Eastern, Pan-American, South Asian and Western Pacific.

Any opinions expressed by individuals in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.