

## **Renal Scientist Newsletter August 2007**

Welcome to this month's Renal Scientist's update. Last month we told you all about the exciting Renal Scientist's Forum at the annual meeting. This month we'll tell you a little about the working party we have set up and how we are trying to help you.

As part of the Renal Association's modernisation of Training, Education and Research in 2004 Prof Caroline Savage asked a number of people for their views on forming a separate Research subcommittee. This was universally agreed to be a good idea and three Renal Scientists were asked to join forces to put forward ideas on how the Renal Association could better help us. The scientists were Dr Alice Smith (who was then the scientist representative on the Executive Committee), Prof Nick Topley and myself, Dr Julie Williams. What became clear quite quickly is that we didn't have a clear picture who all the other scientists were out there and what we all needed. It was suggested that a basic survey was required so that we had a starting point to contact people and canvas their views. This was compiled, agreed and as many people as could be found using both the Renal Association e-mail directory and KRUK's databases were alerted to its presence. This was a huge help and has been the basis for all of the following surveys that you have been asked to take part in. The results of these will follow in a Newsletter later this year.

Following this success we decided to use this collaboration as a springboard to try and bring together all the renal scientists within the Renal Association. At the spring meeting in Aberdeen in 2004 Alice held a very productive and forthright informal gathering to get a better view of our wants and needs. This was exceedingly helpful and provided the evidence that there was a need for a stronger voice for scientists and a recognition of our different needs. Some of the suggestions from this meeting were; a dedicated scientist session at future Renal Association meetings, reduced fees in recognition of our lower incomes and a more detailed survey for greater lobbying leverage. As you can see all of these have now happened. Following on from this we had a further gathering in Belfast in 2005 where we asked for more people to volunteer to set up a working party to keep momentum going on what we feel are the important issues for renal scientists. We were then joined by Dr Tim Johnson, Dr Angela Summers and Dr John Reynolds. The Renal Scientist Working Party (RSWP) met for the first time in Leicester in May 2005 where we discussed the scientist session at the meeting in Harrogate, the more wide-ranging survey and educational issues. It was thought that a representative from Scotland was required and Dr Heather Wilson was invited to join us along with Dr Jill Norman to better cover the large London area. At the very successful Harrogate meeting Alice stood down from her term as Executive Committee representative and chair of the RSWP and Tim Johnson took over. The RSWP met again in November 2006 with agenda items including a review of how the renal scientist forum went in Harrogate, what we wanted from the Brighton meeting, further thoughts on CPD, website development and the survey. Tim went on to present the findings of the most recent survey and our discussions to the Executive Committee to draw their attention to our numbers and specialised issues. One of the important topics was training days and we now have agreement for these to take place (see below). Another was reduced fees and hopefully you will have noticed that for the Brighton meeting we had a substantially reduced cost. A third was more of a voice on the website and in the Newsletter and again I hope you can see that we have achieved this. There were many other items that were raised that we hope to pursue in the future as our numerical representation in the Association becomes more recognised. The most recent meeting of the RSWP was (early) one morning at the Brighton conference. One of the exciting things to come out of this is the news that we are going to be running our first CPD day. This will be a full day on aspects of Proteomics this autumn. The session will be at very reduced costs for Renal Association members but non-members will be welcome to pay and come along too.

So as you can see in the short time the RSWP has been in existence we have managed to achieve quite a bit, and hopefully you are reaping some of the benefits. What we do need however is to keep highlighting the issues important to us. What we therefore would like is for you to contact us with your ideas and suggestions on how to improve things and what you would like to see. You can find out who we are on our new webpage at <http://www.renal.org/pages/pages/academic-affairs/research/renal-scientists.php> (apologies that it isn't quite finished yet). I will be putting email addresses on there fairly soon but in the meantime you can use my address which is on there and I will pass all enquiries on to the

appropriate person. Also we will be writing an 'Ask the expert' area with a list of techniques that you can contact us about if you need to troubleshoot protocols. Is there anything else you would like to see on there? Its your site and we want to make it relevant to you so that you use it regularly. Don't be shy, get in touch with us and tell us your thoughts. In addition we would like to know what topics you'd like us to cover in our Newsletter and if you'd like to contribute to it please feel free to contact me with your ideas.

Julie Williams