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CALL YOURSELF A PHARMACIST?

Most pharmacists recognise that some aspects of the modernisation of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society will benefit the profession and the public. But they may be wondering what impact the changes will have on their own circumstances. There is one aspect of modernisation that affects all members of the Society: mandatory continuing professional development and the questions it raises. Who has to do it, and what will happen if you do not do it?

In the centre of this week's issue, there is a pull-out consultative document prepared on behalf of the Society's CPD implementation group (see also p205). Pharmacists are invited to read it over the next few days and then complete a survey that will be distributed with next week's issue. The implementation group will then take into account members' views on key issues before they put forward policy recommendations to the Council in April.

The document argues that there should be two types of pharmacist on the register: those who undertake CPD and those who do not. Those who do will join the "active" part of the register; those who do not will join the "inactive" register. Only those in the former group can practise as pharmacists. That seems straightforward: if you have any contact with patients, even only an occasional day a year, you will be expected to fulfil the Society's CPD requirements in order to continue to do those locum sessions and stay on the "active" register.

But what about those people who have no patient contact, whose professional lives are removed from pharmacy practice but still have a pharmacy dimension (eg, academics, those working in industry, or those working for the Society or other pharmacy organisations)? Which register should they be on? What about those whose professional lives are far removed from pharmacy (eg, musicians who happen to be MRPharmS)? And do not forget those who no longer work (eg, those who have retired or who have taken a career break to raise a family). Should such people be able to remain on the register or even, apropos a decision adopted in the Netherlands (*Pfj*, 1 February, p152), be allowed to call themselves pharmacists?

These are questions on which all pharmacists have strong opinions. Make sure you let the Society know what you think by completing next week's survey.