

BPC 2008: Pharmacy in the 21st century

The 2008 British Pharmaceutical Conference takes place in Manchester from Sunday 7 September to Tuesday 9 September, with the theme "Pharmacy in the 21st century: adding years to life and life to years". The articles on these two pages summarise what is in store for participants

The British Pharmaceutical Conference is the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's flagship event and Britain's biggest conference for pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists. This year, in response to calls from Society members to make it more accessible and affordable, the conference will for the first time open on a Sunday, with a special daily rate of £25 + VAT for Society members and for bona fide students in full-time education.

If booked by 31 July, the fee for the full three days on the conference is £390 + VAT for members of the Society (and for those making presentations, academics and members of the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences, the Joint Pharmaceutical Analysis Group, the UK and Ireland Controlled Release Society and the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland), £115 + VAT for students and £525 + VAT for others. The fees rise on 1 August by 20 per cent or more.



The Tuesday has been designated as student day and the Society is offering pharmacy students and preregistration trainees a special day rate of £5 + VAT. But places are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. To register contact Angela Lyons (see below).

Further information about the conference, including details of how to reserve places, can be obtained from the conference website (www.bpc2008.org) or from Angela Lyons, Events Manager, Health Links, 3rd Floor, Windsor House, 11A High Street, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7BB (tel 0121 248 3399; fax 0121 248 3390; e-mail alyons@health-links.fsnet.co.uk).

Registration fees include entrance to all conference sessions and the exhibition but exclude accommodation. Hotel accommodation can be booked through Procon by calling Alison Hinman on 01423 564488.

Science tackling issues of disease and quality of life

Andrew Lloyd, professor of biomedical materials at the University of Brighton and BPC 2008 science chairman, provides an insight into the ideas shaping this year's science programme, which looks at pharmaceutical advances in combating disease and improving patient quality of life

Since the founding of the NHS in 1948, advances in pharmaceutical science have improved survival rates in all major disease areas. Each year, new developments add to these successes but increasingly attention is also paid to improving patients' health and quality of life. These developments include leading edge scientific discoveries to improve drug therapies, rapid diagnosis, tissue regeneration and reconstruction.

In some areas advances in our understanding of biological systems and the development of new chemical technologies continue to allow pharmaceutical scientists to develop novel approaches to diagnose and combat disease and tissue degeneration. In other areas, such as antibiotic resistance, pharmaceutical scientists are revisiting technologies originally considered before the 1939–45 war, such as phage therapy and photodynamic therapy.

In reflecting the conference theme of "Pharmacy in the 21st century: adding years to life and life to years", the BPC 2008 science programme, developed in partnership with the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences, will therefore consider the advances in pharmaceutical and biomedical technologies that have contributed to both combating disease and improving patient quality of life and consider how we continue to ensure the effective translation of basic science to the clinic.

As in previous years there will be a range of scientific sessions co-sponsored by other UK societies whose members are also contributing to the scientific advances in the pharmaceutical sciences. For example a session in association with the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists will consider the application of nano-engineering to the de-



Science chairman Andrew Lloyd

velopment of rapid diagnostic systems, a session on pharmaceutical and biomedical materials is being supported by the UK Society for Biomaterials and the Royal Society of Chemistry biomaterials group, and the UK and Ireland Controlled Release Society is offering a session on the latest developments in controlled release of pharmaceutical agents. The APS focus groups on material sciences and process engineering will provide sessions on the leading edge advances in these fields to complement the Joint Pharmaceutical Analysis Group session on the comparability of medicines and a session focusing on the development of personalised medicines to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Green pharmaceutical science

Given the international debate on sustainable development, the programme will also provide an opportunity for an initial discussion of "greening pharmaceutical sciences" and by

looking at recent advances in "green chemistry", consider what further opportunities there may be to contribute to sustainable development and further reduce the carbon footprint of the pharmaceutical industry.

Finally, as science chairman, I am committed to ensuring that BPC 2008 provides every opportunity for new scientists to contribute to scientific debates and network with their peers and more established colleagues to ensure the future of pharmaceutical scientists in the UK. In addition to the usual opportunities to contribute oral and poster presentations, the APS new scientists focus group on the future of pharmaceutical sciences will provide an opportunity to discuss their vision for the future.

Science and practice in harmony

A distinguishing feature of BPC in recent years has been the "Science into practice" sessions. These sessions bring together laboratory-based researchers, practitioners and patients and their representatives, who present the spectrum of cutting edge science, providing patient care and the patient experience.

This year's conference theme "Pharmacy in the 21st century: adding years to life and life to years" has helped us identify four topics of interest which really reflect this theme. They are cancer, cystic fibrosis, dementia and healthcare-associated infection.

Cancer Life expectancy for cancer has greatly increased because of advances in therapy, multidisciplinary care and patient advocacy. As well as new therapies and modes of drug delivery in cancer, there is increasing emphasis on prevention through improvements in diet and the use of medicines such as the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Cystic fibrosis As with cancer, life expectancy for cystic fibrosis has greatly in-

creased and its management has been revolutionised by appropriate use of antibiotics and team-working between doctors, nurse, physiotherapists and pharmacists.

Dementia Unfortunately, increased life expectancy in the population generally means that more of us may go on to develop some form of dementia. We have, therefore, included a session that will consider the challenges and opportunities for the prevention, treatment and management of this condition.

Healthcare-associated infection The final session will focus on an area that is attracting increasing public interest — healthcare-associated infection. This session will consider how we deal with infections that no longer respond to antibiotics and the approaches that are being adopted nationwide to reduce the incidence of outbreaks of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Clostridium difficile* in hospitals and other health care settings. — *Andrew Lloyd, BPC science chairman, and Carmel Hughes, BPC practice chairman.*

BPC-PJ Careers Forum

Presented jointly by the BPC and *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, the BPC-PJ Careers Forum will run for all three days of the conference and will take place in the Exchange exhibition hall at Manchester Central.

The forum is designed to put people looking for career opportunities in touch with potential employers from the hospital and community pharmacy sectors and the pharmaceutical industry.

Entry to the forum is free (and also offers access to the BPC 2008 exhibition) but advance registration is essential (see Careers Forum page at www.bpc2008.org). The details of those who register will be notified to all the employers taking part in the forum and interviews with interested employers will be arranged at mutually convenient times.

The exhibition hall will feature seminar booths and stands from which companies can profile themselves and promote job opportunities, plus private booths for interviews, networking areas for informal discussion and computer terminals on which participants can explore job opportunities.

Meeting everyday needs of practising pharmacists

Carmel Hughes, professor of primary care pharmacy at Queen's University Belfast and BPC 2008 practice chairman, looks forward to September and picks out some of the highlights from a practice programme that aims to meet the everyday needs of pharmacists in practice

The year 2008 is a landmark year for health-care in the UK in that it marks the 60th anniversary of the NHS, a health system that strives to deliver care and services to the whole population.

In recent years the NHS has undergone a number of profound organisational changes in order to meet patient needs and, similarly, the BPC has also developed in an effort to attract more participants. In 2008, accessibility will be the buzzword for the conference, with the event opening its doors on a Sunday and offering registration fees from as little as £25.

BPC 2008 promises to be a pharmacy event not to be missed. As practice chairman for 2008, I have worked to create a programme that meets the needs of pharmacists in their everyday practice, but also challenges all of us to give consideration to pharmacy's place in health care and where the profession of pharmacy is going.

The practice programme reflects the conference theme of "Pharmacy in the 21st century: adding years to life and life to years", and will deliver sessions on pharmacy policy, practice and research, all of which are relevant to pharmacists working across all sectors of the profession.

Expert speakers

Eminent speakers such as Trevor Jones and Harry Burns will set the tone for the conference at the opening sessions on Sunday and Monday.

Linda Strand from the University of Minnesota, one of the authors of a key paper on pharmaceutical care, will give an address on the



Practice chairman Carmel Hughes

Sunday about where pharmacy has come from, where it is going in the future and how it can contribute to patients' lives.

As life expectancy grows so the likelihood that many of us will become users of long-term medication increases. How we can improve the quality of medicines usage in situations where polypharmacy is the norm will be the topic of a session on Sunday, while speakers from the US, New Zealand and closer to home will talk about some of the challenges of improving prescribing and quality of care for those living in care homes.

What we do as pharmacists needs to be underpinned and informed by evidence, so we will also have speakers from the Cochrane Collaboration, an organisation that has evidence-based practice at its heart.

Public health issues

Sessions are also being planned on some of the big public health issues that face society and with which pharmacy must engage, such as obesity and pseudoephedrine.

Reflecting the conference theme of adding life to years, there will be a session on palliative care and end-of-life issues, led by pharmacists working in this field.

As usual, the conference will be showcasing the best research being undertaken in pharmacy practice with a number of oral sessions and an attended poster session on Monday evening.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be involved in the planning of BPC 2008 and I look forward to seeing many pharmacy colleagues in Manchester in September.