



guild matters

NEWSLETTER FROM THE GUILD OF HEALTHCARE PHARMACISTS

Welcome to another edition of *Guild Matters*, the newsletter from the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists.

There has never been a better time to make your views known on the future of the health service and the future of pharmacy. We have outlined the main opportunities for pharmacists to have their voice heard, which include:

- The review of the NHS by health minister Lord Darzi
- The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's 20/20 consultation
- The Clarke inquiry into a future professional leadership body

Your local research ethics committee needs YOU...

Much has changed in the world of research ethics over the past decade. Changes in European legislation regarding clinical trials, and the need to streamline and tighten the controls in the process of clinical trials approval, have led to changes in the work of ethics committees. Oversight and support for this work is now coordinated by the National Research Ethics Service (NRES), part of the National Patient Safety Agency.

Changes in working arrangements include: use of a standard proforma for submissions to ensure that all ethical issues are addressed; ensuring deadlines for submissions and responses are enforced; and making sure there are clear roles for each committee based on the specialism of the membership. A considerable amount of training on a range of ethical issues is provided to committee members by NRES, as well as fees and expenses.

Committees are composed of a designated range of professional and lay members but are only quorate if sufficient numbers of professionals are in attendance. This can lead to members being asked to consider protocols, and attend meetings for other committees. However, there appears to be a shortage of pharmacists available to sit on such committees.



Pharmacists' knowledge of medicines can be invaluable to local research ethics committees

continued overleaf

Guild updates

RPSGB practice framework

The Guild attended a meeting at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society to discuss the Society's draft framework for pharmacy practice. The document, when finalised, will set out what newly qualified pharmacists should be able to do, and help inform the pharmacy undergraduate syllabus. It may act as a reference point for determining what constitutes higher levels of practice.

Responsible pharmacist

The Department of Health is holding a consultation to define the function of a "responsible pharmacist". This will apply to all pharmacies registered with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, so will affect community pharmacy locum work. The responsible pharmacist will ensure standard operating procedures are in place and that a record of the pharmacist on duty is available. The regulations will include the duration that a pharmacist may be absent from the premises and the qualifications needed to be a responsible pharmacist. The regulations must accommodate both hospital and community pharmacy working practice. The Guild will be examining the document, and a draft response will be available on the members' forum during December.

Dates for the diary

Guild and UK Clinical Pharmacy Association conference at Chelsford Grange Hotel, Warwickshire, on 9-11 May 2008

Pharmacists can play many important roles in research committees. In addition to offering pharmaceutical knowledge and expertise, they can:

- Act as a scientist to determine the likelihood that the proposal will deliver “what it says on the tin”
- Act as an “informed member of the public” and be able to offer an opinion on how he or she would feel about being approached and recruited for a given protocol
- Act as a member of the multidisciplinary team and offer an understanding of how the system works, what other professionals do and how the logistics will impact on these professionals

Pharmacists are invaluable to local research ethical committees. So why not find out where and when your local committee meets, and go along to see what they do? Details can be found at www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk

This is a unique and interesting experience, which not only provides considerable continuous professional development opportunities, but also ensures that patients (including our friends and relatives) will benefit from our expertise.

Time has come to influence the future of your profession

Lord Darzi's interim report on the Department of Health review entitled “Our NHS, our future” was published in October. Lord Darzi envisages that care should be:

- High quality
- Effective
- Personalised
- Safe
- Equally available to all patients

To achieve this, greater influence needs to be placed into the hands of local NHS staff. The Guild is producing a detailed submission on your behalf.

If you wish to contribute, this can be done by attending a regional meeting organised by your strategic health authority, by writing directly to the Department of Health (for contact details visit www.ournhs.dh.gsi.gov.uk), by commenting through the members' forum on the Guild website or by e-mailing Jean Curtis (Jeancm23@aol.com).

2020 consultation

The “Pharmacy 2020” consultation led by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society is aiming to build a picture of where

pharmacists want the profession to be in 10 to 14 years time. Much of the material that the Guild will submit to the Darzi review will also be relevant to this consultation. The consultation document can be found at www.rpsgb.org. The consultation period ends on 28 December.

The Clarke inquiry

Nigel Clarke has been appointed to chair an independent inquiry into what pharmacists want from a future professional body. Mr Clarke is keen to engage all pharmacists to establish a representative view of the profession's wishes and expectations. The Guild's views have already been published (*The Pharmaceutical Journal* 2007;279:209).

Public meetings are being held in several venues across Britain to gather members' views. More information can be found at www.theclarkeinquiry.com.

Once again, the Guild will be responding on your behalf, so please let us know your views via the members' forum on the Guild website, your regional Guild member or by e-mailing Jean Curtis, so that we can ensure you are represented appropriately.

Fire hazard alert

The National Patient Safety Agency is considering a drug alert regarding the fire hazard associated with paraffin-based skin products. When these products come into contact with a dressing or an item of clothing, the material becomes highly flammable. Exposing the material to a naked flame, such as a burning cigarette, can be potentially fatal.

A draft has been passed to the Guild for comment.

Join a special interest group

The Guild has a number of specialist interest groups that focus on a specific area of specialist practice in hospital pharmacy or the managed service. Each group has its own committee, which includes a member of Guild Council.

The Procurement and Distribution Interest Group (PDIG) was formed by a group of pharmacists who wanted to improve purchasing standards and the supply chain to hospital pharmacies. The group has professional links with pharmaceutical manufacturers and wholesalers, to improve the interface between the supplier and purchaser.

The group holds a symposium twice each year, and runs a session at the annual Guild conference. These events are always well attended. A report of the recent PDIG symposium is on p380 of this issue of *Hospital Pharmacist* (December).

For more information on PDIG visit the group's website at www.pdig.org.uk

Joining the Guild

Details about joining the Guild can be obtained from the Unite (Amicus) membership department, telephone 0208-462 7755 / 0845-850 4242, e-mail membershipdepartment@amicustheunion.org. Details can also be found at www.amicustheunion.org.