

Higher Education Occupational Physicians/Practitioners (HEOPS) 2008 Autumn Meeting

The autumn meeting of HEOPS was held at Exeter College Oxford and hosted by the University of Oxford Occupational Health Service. The new Director of the Oxford University Occupational Health Service **Dr Ian Brown** welcomed many new members.

Dr Susan Robson (Manchester) updated us on progress and HEOPS' role in responding to the GMC's draft new Fitness to Practice Guidance for medical students. A number of Occupational Physicians have contributed to a suggested rewording of the health issues section of the GMC student declaration document. The GMC updated guidance is due to be published in the first quarter of 2009.

Occupational health services are increasingly required to address fitness for work issues in medical students prior to commencing their F1 year. In order to support occupational health services undertaking such work **Dr Denis Todd (Queens Belfast)** described a proposed system to identify prospective students that need further risk assessment by an Occupational Health Service prior to admission to medical school. This system is based on the three key guidance documents by the GMC in this area namely: 'Tomorrow's Doctors', 'Gateways to the Profession' and 'Good Medical Practice'. A HEOPS working party will be set up to take these matters further.

Dr Katherine Venables (Oxford) presented the latest draft of the HEOPS guidance document on occupational health provision in universities. National surveys of University occupational health services suggest a generally lower level of staffing provision in comparison to guidance for National Health Service occupational health services.

Dr Anne-Marie O'Donnell (Oxford) presented results for the University of Oxford screening of medical students for HIV and hepatitis C that suggest that they are a very low risk population for these infections and that false positive results are likely outcome of such screening.

Mr Simon Wheeler (Warwick Systems IC) presented data collection systems used by universities using OPAS which are principally based on ICD 10.

Dr Christopher Conlon (Nuffield Department of Medicine) gave a comprehensive update on travel medicine for universities. He reminded those present that travellers are more likely to experience ill-health abroad as a result of violence and road traffic accidents. He advised on travel kits used to diagnose Falciparum and Vivax malaria and their uses and stressed the importance of other forms of malaria prevention such as DEET impregnated bed nets.

Dr Paul Nicholson (Procter & Gamble) presented an ongoing systematic review of the evidence base related to pre-placement health assessment and health surveillance for laboratory animal allergy. The aim of this work is to provide a cost-effective evidenced-based approach to such work.

Dr Alan Swann (Imperial College) presented results of a membership survey of HEOPS. Most members had agreed that a fee for membership of HEOPS was appropriate although the opinion on the actual amount this should be varied. Alan also pointed out that his survey suggested that HEOPS membership only represented approximately 20% of UK Universities.

The meeting was followed by an AGM chaired by **Dr Susan Robson** during which the current Executive Committee was duly elected. There was discussion about promotion of HEOPS membership in light of Alan Swann's survey results. Members were encouraged to promote HEOPS membership to all higher education institutions in their area.

The next HEOPS meeting will be hosted by Dr Christine Rajah at City University in Spring 2009.