

## RCGP Chair's Visit to Northern Ireland "The Profession is in Good Hands"



Dr. Clare Gerada, Chair of RCGP, visited Northern Ireland on 26

keep you updated. It is always so rewarding to engage with people at the very beginning of their careers in general practice, and I always leave feeling that the profession is in good hands.

Thank you for your messages, questions and comments, I really do appreciate them.

With very best wishes,

*Clare*

May to host an event in the Antrim Civic centre .

### In her Own Words

Throwing caution to the wind, I braved the Icelandic ash cloud to make my way to Belfast to give a talk to AiTs in Northern Ireland about the future of general practice. Primary Care in Northern Ireland is facing the same issues that we in England face, and it is impressive to see how well RCGP Northern Ireland is leading the drive for improved quality. RCGP NI Chairman Scott Brown and I met with the new Minister for Health, Mr. Edwin Poots, to offer the College's help in improving the quality of healthcare, and I will



Professor Scott Brown, Chair RCGP NI, Mr. Edwin Poots (MLA), Minister for Health Northern Ireland and Dr. Clare Gerada, Chair RCGP

## Managing Alzheimer's Disease in Primary Care

On 25 May 2011 RCGP Northern Ireland hosted an event on Alzheimer's Disease Management in Primary Care. The Recognition Programme as it is known was designed to create a network of dedicated specialists and expert primary care professionals who

would drive change in Alzheimer's disease management across Europe. This programme has been reviewed and is recognised for its scientific and educational value to the medical profession by UEMS. Professor Peter Passmore, Professor of Ageing and Geriatric Medicine Queen's University, Belfast, delivered the programme which gave practical advice to GPs on issues such as the key challenges facing earlier recognition and diagnosis, the referral and management of patients with Alzheimer's Disease: and provided a toolkit to assist GPs in

Practice.

Over 40 GPs attended the event and feedback has been very positive. RCGP Northern Ireland would like to thank everyone who attended and participated on the day, with a special word of thanks to Pfizer and Eisai who kindly sponsored the event.

RCGP Northern Ireland aims to meet the educational needs of local GPs and would like to hear from you if you have topics which you would like to see incorporated into our programme of events. Email Lindsay Wallace on [lwallace@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:lwallace@rcgp.org.uk) and we will endeavour to facilitate this.



## Practice Managers Update



The Royal College of General Practitioners Northern Ireland held an event on How to Improve Your Financial Performance on 27 May 2011 in Dunsilly Hotel Antrim. The event was a resounding success with over 50 practice managers in attendance. RCGP Northern Ireland would like to take this opportunity to thank GlaxoSmithKline and Seamus Dawson and Lisa McCaffrey from Bridge Chartered Accountants, who supported this event. Following on from the success of this and previous events, RCGP Northern Ireland is pleased to announce their first Practice

Managers Conference which will be taking place on the 14 September 2011.

This one day conference will cover a range of topics including Staff Management, QoF, Commissioning, Patient / Practice Communication, Pensions and standard procedures when dealing with the Coroner.

The Conference will be held in the conveniently located Tullyglass Hotel Ballymena. Information and a booking form will be on the Practice Managers Forum and mailed to practices shortly but if you would like to reserve your place now please contact Bronagh Monaghan on: [bmonaghan@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:bmonaghan@rcgp.org.uk)

## Patients in Practice Group Update

Following a decision by the PiP Group to widen its membership a successful recruitment process has now been completed and the PiP Group are delighted to welcome 4 new lay members; Ms Jillian Beggs, Mr Brian O'Hagan, Ms Nicola O'Neill and Dr David Keenan and a new GP member, Dr Shauna Fannin. Professor Uel Gillian will also be supporting the group in an advisory capacity.

Following their induction the new members attended their first meeting on 10 June where plans for the forthcoming **Conference 'Promoting Patient Involvement'**, which is being held in Lisburn on 5 October, were discussed along with the continuing promotion of local patient participation groups following the **launch of the PiP Guidelines 'Patient Participation Groups - Getting Started'**. Copies of the new guidelines were sent to all practices in Northern Ireland at the end of May and the College has received interest from practices as far afield as England. A copy of the guidelines can be downloaded from the RCGP Northern Ireland website on [www.rcgp-ni.org.uk](http://www.rcgp-ni.org.uk)

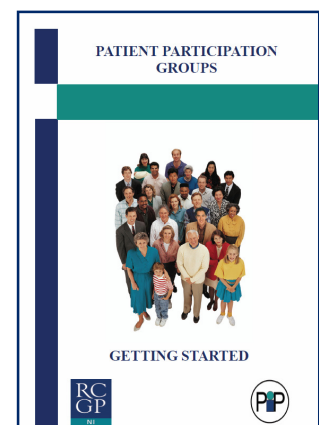


## Quality Committee Update



Following the launch of the Future of General Practice – A 10 Year Strategy the Quality Committee Working Group, led by Dr John O'Kelly (Chair RCGP Northern Ireland Quality Committee) have been working on producing a **Model Practice Framework** paper. The group which includes Dr Jeni McAughey, Ms Jackie Barr and Mr Mark Nolan hope to have it completed by the end of this year and a draft version will be ready for review by RCGP Northern Ireland Council in September.

RCGP Northern Ireland continues to offer the Quality Practice Award in Northern Ireland and 5 practices are currently undertaking the more recently launched modular version.



# Fuel Poverty and Impacts on Human Health

By Professor Christine Liddell, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland



The Warm Homes scheme in Northern Ireland is regional government's principal programme for tackling fuel poverty. Since its inception in 2001, more than £120M has been invested in the Scheme, and more than 80,000 vulnerable households have received refurbished insulation and heating. Being a home improvement programme, it is not surprising that the principle objective of the Warm Homes scheme is often overlooked. In fact, that objective is embedded in human health, with the programme's vision being to build "a society in which people live in a warm and comfortable home and need not be worried about the effect of cold on their health". This emphasis on protecting human health can be found in the strategies implemented all 4 regions of the UK.

UK Fuel Poverty strategies were put in place around 2000. At that time, it was unclear whether they *would* yield any measurable impacts on human health. In the ensuing decade, more than a dozen studies investigating this issue – all with sound methodologies, large sample sizes, and sophisticated analytical frameworks - have been published. Taken together, they provide a moderately-sized evidence base from which to summarise the health impacts of cold and damp housing, and the potential effects of heating and insulation programmes. Key findings include:

A large-scale epidemiological study indicated that, after other key influences are accounted for, there are more excess winter deaths amongst householders who lived in cold and damp homes, when compared with householders who lived in warm and dry homes.

A second epidemiological study reported that rates of emergency hospital admission for respiratory illnesses were significantly correlated with fuel poverty indicators.

However, evaluations which explored changes in health status after heating and insulation had been installed yield few signs of improvements to physical health at one-year follow-up. Whilst most studies suggest improvements in *self-reported* physical health from participants, there were no differences in GP consultation, prescribing, or hospitalisation rates.

More convincing evidence of physical health impacts emerge from studies of fuel poverty and infant growth. A national longitudinal study in the USA compared samples of infants who either received or did not receive a Winter Fuel Payment. Among those who did not, weight gain was more likely to be sub-optimal, and there were significantly more emergency hospital admissions<sup>8</sup>.

Amongst children with a history of asthma, parental reports post-refurbishment suggests significant improvements under randomised controlled trial conditions. Children who received heating and insulation upgrades also had 15%

fewer days off school than did controls. However, improvements in lung function did not emerge from clinical tests measuring peak expiratory flow rate and peak expiratory volume at one-year follow-up.

Impacts on adult mental health are significant and consistent across almost all studies. After refurbishment respondents report immediate impacts on their mood and quality of life, with these effects being sustained at one-year follow-up.

Mental health impacts also emerge strongly for adolescents. In a major longitudinal investigation of housing quality and the health of English adolescents, cold and damp housing emerged as the most significant correlate of multiple mental health risks.

In summary, tackling fuel poverty improves health, with different health impacts at different stages in the lifespan. The most significant impacts on physical health are manifest among the young, whilst impacts on mental wellbeing are to be found from early adolescence onwards.

For the full article and references please visit <http://eprints.ulster.ac.uk/14639/1/fpheatlenerypolicyfinal.pdf>





# EVENTS, CONSULTATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Date	Time	Venue
CPR (Fully Booked)	27 June 2011	7.00pm	RCGP NI Office
CPR (Fully Booked)	29 June 2011	7.00pm	RCGP NI Office
CPR (TBC)	4 July 2011	7.00pm	RCGP NI Office
Practice Managers Conference	14 September	9.30am	Tullyglass Hotel,
Atrial Fibrillation and Management in Primary Care	21 September	TBC	TBC
Patients in Practice (PiP) Conference	5 October	9.45am	Island Civic Centre, Lisburn
Autumn Symposium—Eye Conditions in Primary Care—An Update for GPs (tbc)	October TBC	TBC	TBC
Drugs Misuse Part 1	TBC	TBC	TBC
Consultation			Deadline
DHSSPS:Risk Management & Management in Dementia Services ( <i>Priority B</i> )			18 July 2011
DHSSPS:Consultation on Proposal to Widen Health Service Eligibility for Antiviral Treatment for Influenza			10 August 2011
DHSSPS: The Sunbeds Regulations and Fixed Penalty			12 August 2011
HSC/HPA: Community Development Strategy for Health & Wellbeing			19 August 2011
HSC: Northern Ireland Formulary ( <i>Priority A</i> )			19 August 2011
If you require further information or wish to have your views included in any of RCGP Ireland responses please e-mail Angela McLaughlin <a href="mailto:amclaughlin@rcgp.org.uk">amclaughlin@rcgp.org.uk</a>			
New consultations and opportunities to have your say are arising frequently. Watch our website for the latest information <a href="http://www.rcgp.org.uk/ni">www.rcgp.org.uk/ni</a>			

## Understanding Suicide (US)

### and Help-Seeking in Northern Ireland



GPs who have lost a patient to suicide will be invited to participate in research

bereaved by suicide.

A key objective is to explore the experiences and needs of GPs in caring for people who have died by suicide and those subsequently bereaved.

(Stewart, 2007). The study aims to provide recommendations for a service strategy that caters for both urban and rural populations in Northern Ireland.

commissioned by the Department of Health to be undertaken by Compass, the research and policy branch of the charity body Niamh (N.I. Association for Mental Health). The primary objective is to explore help-seeking behaviour in urban and rural areas by suicidal people and those

Health service accessibility is on average 40% worse in rural areas, when compared to NI as a whole

For more information please contact the Understanding Suicide research team on Tel: 02890328474

