

INTERNATIONAL update

China in your hands

A health care system led by family medicine doctors is emerging for 1.5 billion people.

And the Royal College of GPs is working with our Chinese counterparts to make it a reality.

Major advances have been made in the last few years in working alongside Chinese doctors to develop primary care and family medicine to the world's most populated nation.

Working with our academic partner Imperial College London, RCGP's International team has placed more than 50 community doctors from China in UK training practices, to observe the UK's holistic approach to primary health care.

Seminars and workshops have also been held in cities and provinces across China, attended by many hundreds of Chinese doctors who are eager to develop their

skills and improve their clinical knowledge and practice.

'They see better trained and qualified GPs as the backbone of its emerging primary health care system'

The Chinese Ministry of Health has recently committed to providing all urban community and rural township hospitals with qualified general practitioners - by 2012. They see better trained and qualified GPs as the backbone of its emerging primary health care system, meeting more of its population's health needs and reducing their dependence on hospitals.

The RCGP's strongest links to date have been with the Health Bureau of Zhejiang province, a province of more than 50 million people on China's eastern seaboard that has been at the vanguard of China's economic boom. Its main city is Hangzhou.

There are also strong links emerging with nearby Shanghai Municipal Health Bureau,

which serves a city of more than 15 million people.

But China is huge and the challenge is enormous, so RCGP is building on its early work in China to develop its approach to responding to the demand for support and knowledge coming from China.

Dr Garth Manning, medical director for the family medicine programme at the RCGP, said: "We are renewing our Memorandum of Understand (MoU) with Zhejiang province this year and continue to work with Imperial who are delivering a major consultation skills workshop there next Spring."

"But we recognise that there are so many Chinese doctors who want to learn from how things are done in the UK that we will be delivering more of our programme and learning in China itself, where many more doctors will benefit, although we will still be welcoming small numbers who are able to make it to the UK to observe how patients here consult with their GP.

"We want to consolidate our existing relationships and show to other provinces the work that we have been doing in Zhejiang, to expand our involvement to a wider geographical area."

RCGP is developing a structured learning curriculum, in partnership with doctors and officials in Zhejiang to ensure it is relevant to the region.

Dr Manning added: "The RCGP doesn't simply export the UK exam around the world, we have clear principles of working with local partners to ensure what is developed is totally relevant to the local situation. These are the principles we are following in developing our structured learning pathway in China."



Dr Frances Carter of Imperial College London, delivering an RCGP-sponsored workshop in Oxford

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Dr Iona Heath

Welcome from Iona Heath, President of the Royal College of GPs

Dear Colleague

Welcome to this short Update on the International work at the Royal College of GPs. A full International newsletter will be sent to all RCGP members early next year, as we mark our 60th anniversary by announcing a number of exciting new developments and letting you know how GPs can get involved in supporting our international work.

Even just from these few Update pages, you will see that there is a lot happening in the world of health and that the RCGP is at the forefront of developments.

Our work in China is very exciting, if somewhat daunting, as we respond to requests made to us to work alongside doctors in provinces that have populations equivalent to that of the UK.

The recent inaugural meeting in New Delhi, reported in this Update, is the culmination of years of work by the RCGP in India, bringing together existing and potentially new Indian partners who are working to establish family medicine as a reputable speciality within the Indian healthcare system.

A number of doctors, at various points in their career, are supported by the RCGP to undertake short visits overseas, to gain experience – some of their reports appear in this Update, including an update from an Associate in Training who took time out to work in Tanzania and Uganda.

And we again welcomed many friends from across the world to our International Development Days, held annually for centres who are, or who are working towards, becoming accredited centres for their own locally developed versions of the MRCGP examination.

Enjoy reading this Update on our International work and do get in touch with your own ideas and experiences of working beyond these shores. As the RCGP prepares to mark its 60th anniversary in 2012, and as the UK welcomes the world to the Games of the 30th Olympiad, we will be letting you know about more opportunities for you to get involved.

Dr Iona Heath

Transforming our approach to international affairs - a 10-year strategy

- **Moving global primary care policy higher up the health agenda of the RCGP, other specialities and other countries.**
- **Increasing the quality of education and delivery of general practice/family medicine.**
- **Influencing EU legislation and policy relevant to the training and delivery of primary care.**

“Our 10-year international strategy sets out the RCGP’s approach to working collaboratively to promote family medicine and primary health care as a cornerstone for strengthening health systems. The RCGP will continue to work internationally in partnership with others to increase the breadth and expertise of the health workforce in primary care and family medicine, and to contribute to improvements in the quality and safety of patient care.”

Prof Val Wass, Head of School of Medicine at Keele University and Chair of the International Committee at the Royal College of GPs.

To read our newly-adopted International Strategy, go to our website, click on 'International' and follow the link.

Join Prof Wass at this year’s RCGP Annual Conference – see back page for details



Prof Val Wass

International Development Days 2011

Around 70 doctors and healthcare professionals from across the world attended this year’s RCGP International Development Days and annual conference in Croydon, South London.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the international examination, the locally developed equivalent of the MRCGP examination now run in seven centres around the world, including Egypt, South Asia, Malta and Kuwait.

Dr John Howard, the medical director who chairs the MRGCP (International) examination board, said: “Some delegates have now become old friends whilst others we welcomed for the first time. We do all, though, share the same goals and passion to improve the quality and delivery of family medicine internationally.

“The development days serve to provide countries both accredited to the MRCGP(Int) standard and those working towards it with the opportunity to develop and learn from each other. We merely act as facilitators, providing workshops or lectures which meet the needs and wants of our international partners.”

“Many workshops are designed and delivered by our international delegates. We believe that we in the UK have as much to learn from our international colleagues as they do from us.”

The RCGP continues to build its contacts around the world who are seeking to develop their own version of the MRCGP examination and to have it accredited by the College.

Many of the presentations from the International Development Days are available on the RCGP website - click on International and follow the link.

In organising next year’s International Development Days, the College is open to suggestions on workshops – please email your ideas to us at international@rcgp.org.uk

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Many GPs across the UK have some involvement in China or the wider continent of Asia. The RCGP International team is drawing together a picture of which UK GPs have an interest in China and who are available to deliver our focused and succinct programme of learning.

If you are, or wish to be, involved in the delivery of future programmes in China, contact us at international@rcgp.org.uk with a brief summary of any relevant experience.

Tom Owen, International Programme Officer at RCGP, added: “We are trying to respond to the needs of our colleagues in China. We’re not looking to impose our views, but simply to respond to what they are asking. We recognise that the UK and its family medicine doctors have much to offer in terms of training, development and enthusiasm to this amazing, emerging nation of China.”

The RCGP is also supporting the visit by the UK’s Under Secretary of State for Health, Anne Milton MP, who makes a five-day visit to China in November, following the signing of a health MoU between the UK and Chinese governments last year.



During the Development Days annual dinner, Professor Nagwa Eid Sobhy Saad was awarded the International President’s Medal for her significant contributions to the development of family medicine in Egypt.

For many years, training and assessment in Egypt had met with little success but when Nagwa became Chair of the examination committee for RCGP International accreditation of Family Medicine training in Egypt in 2008, there was a most remarkable development of the licensing examination in Family Medicine. MRCGP[INT] accreditation was achieved within a year under Professor Nagwa’s leadership – a very significant event for the RCGP after the many years of slow progress. There is little doubt that this success reflects Nagwa’s remarkable leadership and her ability to lead with quiet determination, champion her cause and succeed.

Prof Val Wass, Chair of the International Committee at the RCGP, said: “Professor Nagwa is remarkable for her personal modesty in the face of very significant achievement. She continues to work determinedly to improve training and raise standards of family medicine practice and has promulgated the development of family medicine as a speciality.”

Professor Nagwa became Head of the Family Medicine Department at Cairo University in 2010 and is keen to disseminate her country’s achievements to neighbouring Middle Eastern countries.

Where in the World Are We?



The examination known as the MRCGP (Int) is now fully accredited in seven sites, with Brunei, Dubai, Kuwait, Oman and South Asia being joined more recently by Egypt and Malta. Kosovo is at an earlier stage of development, and a number of other countries - most recently some from Africa - have expressed keen interest in being accredited for the exam.

The annual International Development Days conference was again a major success in 2011, attracting over 70 delegates from 16 countries.

South Asia

The South Asia MRCGP(Int) exam continues successfully twice annually, with written papers held in May and November and with OSCEs in Karachi each March and Colombo each September. It is hoped that an Indian OSCE centre can be established by early 2013 in Chennai, to meet the growing demand from Indian candidates. The South Asia Board has recently facilitated workshops in Colombo and Lahore, in its efforts to promote ongoing professional development among examiners in the region.

Africa

Ever closer links have been established with the Faculty Board of Family Medicine of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria, and the West African College of Physicians, and MoUs have been signed with both. Drs Colan Robinson and Ed Parry-Jones remain our key advisers. Under the RCGP's recent International Strategy Review we have identified Africa as a key priority for 2012, and a small Africa Working Group has been established to advise on how to develop activities in sub-Saharan Africa. Discussions with Sudan appear to be gaining new momentum, and a visit will take place in October. Some very exciting postgraduate programmes had been taking place in Libya earlier in the year, but sadly had to be halted due to the security situation. Egypt is now one of most dynamic MRCGP(Int) sites, and a range of new activities are being discussed and planned with the Egyptian Ministry of Health.

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E-Portfolio now available to international members

The RCGP wants all its members, whether in the UK or overseas, to be able to access the same benefits and services, so in July 2011 the RCGP Revalidation e-Portfolio was made available to overseas and international members.

The e-Portfolio was launched in December 2010 and GPs in the UK currently use the tool to record Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Professional Development Plans (PDPs) in preparation for appraisal.

In time they will use the tool to support them through the UK's system of Revalidation and additional features will be added for this purpose. Approximately 10,000 GPs are registered on the e-Portfolio in the UK and the number continues to increase.

Earlier in 2011, the College ran a survey for users of the tool and a number of changes are being made in response to comments received. Later this year significant improvements will be made to the CPD and PDP sections, making them more user-friendly. The system will be developed to allow a user's portfolio to be automatically updated if they complete one of the College's Online Learning Environment (<http://www.elearning.rcgp.org.uk/>) modules.

With the exception of e-GP (which is Department of Health funded), these are available to international and overseas members free of charge.

International and overseas members can use the e-Portfolio to record CPD and PDP and may wish to use the tool simply to store information to export for discussion with a colleague or appraiser at a later date. They may wish to use it to document achievements if they are considering becoming a Fellow of the Royal College of GPs.

UK-based GPs can give their appraiser access to their e-Portfolio but because this function requires the user to work within a UK-based Primary Care Organisation (PCO), it is unavailable to those outside the UK.

Users can, however, export the contents of their portfolio at any time into a folder which presents a summary PDF document plus any other documents that have been uploaded. This may be helpful for discussions that they have with colleagues about learning, reflections and development.

If international and overseas users want to collect supporting information on an annual basis, they can manually 'close' their appraisal using a new feature on the tool. This results in supporting information being archived as a PDF summary document in Area 4 (Previous Appraisal Documentation). When information is archived in this way, the user can begin to collect information for a new 'appraisal' year.

You can read more about the Revalidation e-Portfolio - including helpful guides and videos - on the website - click on International and follow the links.

If you have any problems or have any questions, please contact Helpdesk (available 8am - 7pm GMT, Monday to Friday except Bank Holidays): Telephone: +44 20 3188 7667, email: gpeportfolio@rcgp.org.uk



Family Medicine India

Dr Garth Manning, medical director for the family medicine programme, reports on the Inaugural Meeting of Family Medicine India, organised by the Royal College of GPs.

RCGP has been collaborating with a number of Indian partners for many years, starting with Apollo Hospitals in 1999, but over time has been working more and more closely with both private and public bodies to support the training and development of the family doctors of the future.

India is a large country which has for many years concentrated on the development of specialisation and super-specialisation, and has rather ignored family medicine.

Thankfully, that is now changing, and we are starting to see much more explicit support at government level. As the late Barbara Starfield so clearly demonstrated, countries with a strong system of family medicine have better health outcomes, greater patient satisfaction and lower pharmaceutical usage - and all at lower cost.

This has surely got to be attractive to governments everywhere, who are all struggling with aging populations and spiraling health costs. The Indian government has rightly identified family medicine development as an important health care priority, and RCGP is delighted to be collaborating with them on these developments.

In light of all the recent progress, we felt the time was right to organise a seminar, to bring together current and potential Indian partners, along with key health leaders - especially the Ministry of Health, National Board of Examiners, Medical Council of India and Indian Medical Association - to share their views and experience and offer ideas to help in the establishment and development of family medicine as a reputable speciality within the Indian health care system.

We were ably supported in this venture by the MIT School of Health Sciences (Pune) and Haymarket

Medical Media (UK) who used the occasion to launch their on-line CME programme (myCME.com) for the Indian market.

Chief Guest for the seminar was Mr Chandramouli, Secretary for Health in the Ministry of Health; whilst Special Guests included Mr Keshav Desiraju, Additional Secretary for Health in the Ministry of Health. Also present was Professor Gautam Sen, Director of Education at the Association of Surgeons of India, a former Member of the Governing Board of the Medical Council of India and a strong advocate for family medicine development.

All speakers stressed the importance of family medicine in the future of Indian medical care, and all expressed surprise at how a country which previously had good GP services had somehow managed to lose them by being diverted down the specialisation route.

Professor Sen gave a timely address entitled 'A Crisis in Indian primary health care' which particularly highlighted the history of health care development, the problems caused by the absence of a strong primary care system and the steps which were urgently needed to support its future development.

Speaker after speaker emphasised similar points and it was striking that ideas and expertise so clearly exist in country, but need the freedom to pursue a sound PHC strategy.

All participants felt strongly the event was invaluable for bringing together so many key players and for providing a forum for open debate and discussion. They were unanimous in proposing that it become an annual event, and urged RCGP to continue to take an active role in supporting Indian colleagues in their journey of development.



Where in the World Are We? China

Following the sad death of Dr Grant Blair, our lead China Adviser, late last year, the programme has been led by Dr Frances Carter from Imperial College and her colleague Dr Graham Easton, who are supported by the excellent team recruited and developed by Grant Blair. (See also front page of this Update).

Europe

Partnership continues with many colleagues within Europe. The RCGP is building ever-closer collaboration with colleagues in Cyprus, to develop family medicine programmes and assessments. We are also anxious to assist colleagues in Romania, with whom we signed an MoU last year. They have been very badly hit by government cuts in the health budget and morale is at rock bottom. Wonca Europe and the RCGP have been discussing ways in which we might support our Romanian colleagues through this difficulty, so that at least some CME and other activities can be encouraged. The RCGP has also had very friendly discussions with colleagues from Russia, during a visit to the RCGP CSA Centre, and we hope to develop a joint MoU in the near future.

Malta

Following a successful accreditation visit by the RCGP's Examination Development Assessors last year, the Malta College of Family Doctors' examination was approved as having the same standard of academic rigor as the UK's MRCGP examination, and the MRCGP(Int) Board formally granted initial accreditation for one year.

In August 2011, after another quality assurance visit, accreditation for MRCGP(Int) was extended for another two years. The next re-accreditation visit is expected in Summer 2013. The RCGP is now in the process of finalising legal formalities and expects that successful exam candidates will soon be able to apply for International Membership.

Dr Joseph Cassar, the Minister of Health of the Republic of Malta, visited the RCGP in August 2010 and held talks with the RCGP President Dr Iona Heath and Medical Director for MRCGP(Int) Dr John Howard. During his visit, Dr Cassar pledged the Ministry's support and expressed commitment to pursuing MRCGP(Int).

Co-operation started back in 2002, when Dr Marek Jezierski visited the island and taught an International Teachers' Course for family medicine trainers at the Malta College of Family Doctors (MCFD).

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Where in the World Are We? Middle East

Significant developmental work continues with our colleagues in Egypt, and MRCGP[INT] activities continue in Dubai, Kuwait and Oman. Our other focus in the Middle East has been with Iraq and the RCGP has been exploring ways of working ever closer with colleagues there to develop family medicine. Following a workshop in Beirut in October 2010, facilitated by Dr Anwar Khan and Dr Garth Manning, a formal proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Health in Baghdad for a series of observational visits for Iraqi doctors to UK. These visits are to be for eight weeks each, for three cohorts each of 12 doctors, and will involve a number of educational activities including training in management and communication skills. UK-based GPs from the Iraqi diaspora will be engaged as key educational mentors for the visitors.

India

Our Indian collaboration continues to grow, and a number of CME programmes, Diploma courses and residencies, accredited by the RCGP, are running nationally. In July the RCGP ran a very successful one-day seminar in Delhi, bringing together current and future Indian partners along with representatives from the Ministry of Health, Medical Council of India, National Board of Examiners and IMA College of GPs. (See also page 5 of this Update).

Asia Pacific Region

Brunei has been a long-standing partner with the RCGP, and was one of the first sites accredited for MRCGP(INT). We are now breaking new ground with them as, for the first time, the RCGP is able to sponsor international medical graduates to come to UK for postgraduate study. Hurdles have had to be overcome, but our Bruneian colleagues have proved equal to the task and we are delighted that to date four doctors are studying in the UK, with much appreciated assistance from our colleagues in the London Deanery. We continue to work closely with our colleagues in Thailand to support further development of exams and assessment. We are also seeking ways to collaborate more closely with colleagues in Malaysia - and have even had a recent request for assistance from as far away as Fiji!

International travel scholarships



“Health care is not free and many people cannot afford to either get to the hospital, or to pay for an appointment, investigations, treatment or admission, when they get there. Our definition of palliative patients broadened to include not only those suffering from progressive, terminal disease but also those bed bound or suffering from chronic disease with no form of support and no-one to care for them.

Shirati was in the process of applying for a licence to dispense morphine, and we spent time with the nursing and medical staff in preparation for this. We were also able to set up a repeat prescription system to enable palliative patients to obtain basic analgesia free of charge on a regular basis.”



Dr Kathy Curtis Hayward,
Gloucestershire GP – August 2011



“The concept is simple - where better to learn about tropical medicine than in tropical countries? The plan was to do a trial run of the course with half the time in Tanzania and half in Uganda. In keeping with the ethos of the course, a Robin Hood style payment scheme was adopted. The “rich” doctors from the West paid full course fees to enable the “poor” doctors from developing countries to attend the course for free. I quickly signed up, finished my GP registrar year, got my jabs and jumped on a plane to Tanzania.”



Dr Shazir Munir,
London GP – August 2011



The RCGP runs an International Travel Scholarship scheme, providing funds to GPs to make research visits overseas. The scheme is open to doctors at every point of their career, including Associates in Training, First 5s, doctors in mid-career and those nearing retirement.

Interested in going in 2012? To read dozens of reports from doctors who have undertaken research trips through the Royal College of GPs and get more details of the 2012 scheme, go to www.rcgp.org.uk click on International and follow the link. ■

Team work

Stepping up

“As promotion of primary care internationally is placed ever higher on the agenda, this is a very exciting time to be involved with the RCGP. So far I have been overwhelmed by the amount of enthusiasm for collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experience between British doctors and our international colleagues. It is clear that there is a particular momentum for developing interest and activity in global health issues among the young doctors of the UK.

“This is a very exciting time to be a GP in the UK, particularly for those of us with an interest in international health. As young doctors we are thinking ever more beyond the borders of the UK to consider the wider influence of our roles as general practitioners. The Junior International Committee (JIC) acts to increase opportunities and provide support for such doctors, thus harnessing the enthusiasm of GP trainees and First 5 GPs towards strengthening primary care internationally. The JIC is made up of a dynamic core group, supported in its work by a growing membership. Involvement can vary from sharing ideas, experiences and advice with others, to helping implement and run projects. Current projects include forming links with international health organisations and facilitating research collaborations and international exchange.”

Dr Robin Ramsay is a GP in Elgin, Morayshire and was elected Chair of the Junior International Committee in May of this year. For full details of Rob's biography and vision for GPs in their first five years getting involved in international work, go to www.rcgp.org.uk click on International and follow the link.

Standing Down

Two long-serving International Development Advisers (IDAs) for the RCGP have relinquished their posts as they hand over to their successors in Dubai and in Kuwait.

Dr Mike Jeffries (pictured) has given more than a decade of service and expert advice to the International. He was one of the first pair of Examination Development Assessors (EDA) in 2001 when he visited Oman and recommended that its Primary Care examination be recognised as the first MRCGP (Int) site.

Mike subsequently became IDA to Dubai and was responsible for creating with his colleagues in Dubai the examination which was also recognised for MRCGP (Int) standards, the third such site to be so. He continued to oversee its development with close links to the team there.

In addition he has had a pivotal role in the Family Practice Programme in Kuwait, which he visited many times as a Tutor and an Examiner. His diplomatic skills were evident when he re-negotiated the contract with the RCGP at a time when difficulties might have brought about the ending of the programme.

Mike's advice and wise counsel is valued by RCGP and will be much missed.

Dr John Wrout has been IDA to Kuwait for almost a decade and has sustained the Family Practice Programme and its examination through many turbulent times, not least when he was doing Quality Assurance by email on their



examination papers while on his Round the World voyage on the QE2! John's dedication to high standards and to strong personal relationships have ensured that the Kuwait Family Practitioner Training Programme is now on a secure footing, as evidenced by its recent recognition as MRCGP (International) for a further three years.

John has recently completed an assignment as EDA to Malta, where his diplomatic and assessment skills were used to great benefit.

Dr Rob Caird FRCGP, an active internationalist and founding member of the MRCGP (Int) Board, has retired from the Board. At the

August Board meeting, Dr Caird was praised for his contribution to the international work of the College and the development of Family Medicine, specifically in the Middle East.

Dr Caird is one of the most senior and experienced International Examiners of the College. He has extensive experience of the curricula and the assessment of Family Medicine in the Middle East and has previously undertaken quality assurance and examination evaluation visits to both Oman and Dubai.

He has significant teaching and examining experience in support of the development of the Clinical Skills Assessment (simulated surgery) of the Family Medicine Residency Programme at the Kuwait Institute of Medical Specialities. In his capacity as Examination Development Assessor, Dr Caird has several times visited the Sultan Qaboos University in Oman and the Dubai Health Authority in the U.A.E. to assess the quality and standards of the MRCGP[INT]-accredited examinations in those countries to ensure they are of the same academic rigor as the UK's MRCGP examination.

For many years Dr Caird also served as a Member on the RCGP International Committee. In retirement, Dr Caird will continue to be actively engaged in our international work, represent the College and provide his invaluable expertise in ongoing and new projects.

Fellow of the Royal College of GPs (International)

The RCGP has now developed International Fellowship FRCGP (Int). A Fellow of the College exemplifies its motto 'cum scientia caritas', and is an ambassador for the College's standards and values in whom the College is happy to signal its pride. The College's first Fellows were elected in 1969.

Fellowship is an honour, denoting the esteem in which a Member is held by his or her peers. It is a mark of achievement to which every Member should aspire. Fellowship can be merited both by the breadth and the depth of achievement. Some Fellows earn recognition for contributions made in a number of areas and over extended periods of time.

To learn more about Fellowship of the RCGP, for UK and International members, go to www.rcgp.org.uk click on International and follow the link. ■



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in practice



Annual Primary
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Join us for the International Session at this year's conference

"Transforming our approach to global health - **how can we involve you?**"

Thursday, 20 October at 4.15pm,
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Main speaker – Prof Val Wass,
Head of School of Medicine at Keele University and
Chair of the International Committee at the Royal College of GPs.



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2nd ANNOUNCEMENT

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Lymphgefäßmann, Josephinum's collection of anatomical and
obstetric wax models, 1782-1785

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