

Round the regions

London

Since we took over as area representatives in July 2007, we have organized a number of evening lectures and an ACPWH-approved course.

The first of the evening lectures was held at the Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust in October 2007, and was delivered by Claudine Domoney, who is a consultant gynaecologist and a member of the Institute of Psychosexual Medicine. Claudine talked about the relationship between pelvic floor dysfunction and psychosexual dysfunction. It was quite clear that the majority of us are treating psychosexual disorders and Claudine's information was greatly appreciated.

This was followed by the ACPWH-approved workshop on pelvic floor assessment, which was also held at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. This excellent course was tutored by Pauline Walsh and Teresa Cook. Feedback was very positive – many reported that they were keen to do the anorectal dysfunction workshop in the future – and the venue was appropriate.

In January 2008, we held another evening lecture, this time at St Thomas' Hospital, entitled 'From Back to Front – Redesigning the Pelvic Floor Services'. Becky Aston talked about her experience as a research fellow and the joys of creating a pelvic floor dysfunction clinic. Cathy Davis was present and discussed her ongoing research into current practice in pelvic floor clinics across England. This event stimulated a good debate about services in London and the surrounding areas.

In June 2008, Claudine Domoney presented again, this time talking about pelvic pain, its aetiology, differential diagnoses and medical treatment. She discussed a few case studies that we could all relate to in terms of our own patient groups. Claudine is a great speaker and very enthusiastic, and we hope she will return again.

We are planning to ask Professor Clare Fowler to present an evening lecture on the influence of multiple sclerosis on bladder, bowel and sexual function. We are also organizing a pilot practical ACPWH workshop on 'Physiotherapy for Bladder and Bowel Dysfunction'.

Paula Igualada-Martinez & Charlotte Lion

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North East

We have been continuing our daytime format for meetings at the University Hospital of North Durham.

On the 28 November 2007, 13 women's health physiotherapists, including two students, met to hear Emilie Nesbit's feedback on 'The Rise and Fall of the Pelvic Floor', a conference and book launch led by Jeanette Haslam and Jo Laycock. We were also updated on current infection control policies. Good details of best practice for internal examination were given, including how to write up findings.

Those of us who had been to Conference reflected on the presentations and each attendee fed back on one or two of these. Lots of information was given and a good debate followed. Julie Ellis informed us of her upcoming research project into digital assessment and we look forward to hearing the results.

The North East group has been established for a long time. Our records show at least 20 years of continuous meetings, and before that, Betty Barlow lead the group in the 1970s. We felt that this was something to mark and invited past members of our group to attend a celebration. On 26 March 2008, we started our meeting with a shared lunch; 10 current members, six retired members and one student attended. With everyone agreeing that work is getting ever busier, it was lovely to catch up (Fig. 1).

Michelle Taylor, a representative from MDTi, Wolverhampton, spoke on Femmax vaginal dilators, and highlighted their use in radiotherapy, and for patients with vaginismus and lichen sclerosis. We were also shown a simple but effective flow rate device for home use by men.

Chris Taberham fed back on her audit project investigating patients' experience of physiotherapy for major gynaecology surgery. Working with physiotherapists, consultants and the multidisciplinary team, she has developed a local standard of care. Questionnaires were evaluated



Figure 1. Past and present members of the North East group celebrating more than 20 years of continuous meetings.

from patients and consultants. The study successfully demonstrated the value and importance of physiotherapy input to help patients achieve their full potential recovery. Chris and her team had developed a grid progression table for activities of daily living for post-gynaecological surgery and lower-segment Caesarean section patients.

Julie Ellis attended the urogynaecology conference in Northampton on 3 March 2008 and gave us feedback on all of the talks, including Julia Herbert's presentation and an update on bladder medication.

Being aware of needing evidence for our continuing professional development files, everyone was given a certificate of attendance, and encouraged to reflect on what they had learnt and how this might be put into practice. Thank you to all who have spoken at our meetings. We aim to have three meetings per year, the next having been scheduled for June 2008.

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Oxford and South Midlands

The autumn study day was held at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. The day began with a talk by Katie Glover on the research that she undertook for her Manipulation Association of Chartered Physiotherapists studies into core stability. This was followed by an audit undertaken by Dr James Swain, a general practice registrar, on general practitioner compliance with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines on urogynaecology. Miss G. Tasker FRCS then led an inter-

active talk on 'The Consultant's Expectations of Physiotherapy Input for Vaginismus'. In the afternoon, Mr Jonathan Greenland FRCS, a consultant urologist, provided a tutorial on interstitial cystitis.

The spring study day was held at Stoke Mandeville Hospital on 1 May 2008. It commenced with a presentation by Sarah Fishburn about the Pelvic Partnership. Jane Newman and Rosi Haunton-Barron then gave a summary of the 2007 ACPWH Conference. The morning session ended with a presentation by Mr Ian Currie FRCS, director of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, on 'An Update of Vaginal Prolapse Surgery'. In the afternoon, Mr Jonathan Greenland FRCS, a consultant urologist, gave a teaching session on urodynamics.

The next training day is scheduled for 4 November 2008 and will be held at the Floyd Auditorium, Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

Unfortunately, because of poor uptake, the anorectal course, which was planned for April 2008, was cancelled, but some of the potential applicants have now joined our group for study days.

Rosi Haunton-Barron

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Scotland

It has been a busy 12 months in Scotland. We hosted two study days under the ACPWH banner, and various other study days and courses have also taken place. Dundee hosted a faecal incontinence conference in September that featured presentations by Julia Herbert, Professor Christine Norton and Mr Ken Campbell. Well done Caroline Davie, who managed to run the event for only £20, including lunch.

The autumn ACPWH study day took place in Ayrshire in November. There was a full and varied programme, ranging from topics such as the menopause and sexual health, to physiotherapy in stoma care and postnatal depression.

The spring ACPWH study day was held in Edinburgh and was excellent. A special mention has to be made about the lecture by Dr Robbie Steel, a consultant psychiatrist, who made us think about the way we speak to patients and their perceptions of pelvic pain. Before lunch, we heard from Sarah Ridley, a physiotherapist in cystic fibrosis management. It is wonderful to

think that care has improved so much over the years that we now see women with cystic fibrosis become mothers. The afternoon was somewhat different. Maureen McSherry, a consultant midwife at Wishaw General Hospital, came to demonstrate the Fleming technique and brought with her some fresh pigs' perineums that made the whole concept of episiotomies much easier to understand. We got the opportunity to try suturing, which was more difficult than you might imagine!

Later in the spring, the Lothian and Fife continence interest groups held their study days, which were very well attended. Finally, the Australian Physiotherapy and Pilates Institute 'Pilates in Women's Health' course was held in Paisley. This was an excellent weekend and everyone returned to work inspired.

I am stepping down as area representative, but I'm delighted to report that Kate Lough from the Western Infirmary in Glasgow is taking over after the summer holidays. We can only keep you informed about what is going on throughout the country if you tell us what you are organizing and keep your contact details up to date. It would be great to hear more from the north. We are so spread out as a region that it is important to keep in touch.

Elaine Struthers

Area representative

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South East

The members of our region have decided to have two evening meetings a year. Our last was at Pembury Hospital in Kent in September 2007 and was attended by almost 30 people. The general consensus was to have an evening with an obstetric bias. Moira Clark spoke about Pilates and antenatal education, and Ailsa Brooke spoke on antenatal leaflets. Tracey Miles and Libby Lewis told us about their antenatal education group, including an introduction to 'Sandie', i.e. weighted sandbags, the component parts of which add up to the weight that the pelvic floor can expect cope with at the end of a pregnancy. The evening ended in a much-needed chance to discuss various issues and network, highlighting the necessity for such meetings.

At the end of April 2008, Donna Osborn presented 'An Overview of Lymphoedema for Urogynaec Physiotherapists' and Linda Wolfenden reported back on Conference at the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath.

The meetings have been well attended and the membership has expanded.

Our term as area representatives has been extended to cover maternity leave, but will need to finish at the end of this year. Therefore, we are searching for someone to take over as area representative from the beginning of 2009!

**Romy Tudor, Nadine Ranger,
Susannah Staples & Debbie Joice**

Area representatives

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Wales

We have been running two group meetings a year, in May and November. These are held in mid-Wales for ease of travel. We usually have an attendance of about 10 representatives from across Wales, who then feed back to their specific locations.

At our last meeting, we invited Philippa Ford, the physiotherapy policy officer for the Welsh Assembly, to talk about her role. She provided a lot of useful information about service planning for the future.

The Wales group is looking to standardize patient leaflets and assessment forms across the principality.

There is also a local group of women's health physiotherapists in South Wales, who meet quarterly for an afternoon to provide a forum for peer support and education. These meetings are well-attended and aim to review a paper at the start of the afternoon and some case studies at the end. We have also brought in speakers to provide alternate emphases on continence and obstetrics so that all attendees' interests are covered. Speakers this year have included Peter Bowen-Simpkins, who spoke about aspects of the menopause. This was extremely well-received and stimulated many questions.

In February this year, the South Wales' group meeting was held at the midwifery-led unit in Llandough, where the midwifery manager talked about changing practices at delivery. The tour of the unit was especially enjoyable and gave plenty of opportunity for questions.

The next two meetings for the south Wales group have been arranged for September and December 2008.

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West Midlands

Three evening meetings were held over the past year. In January 2007, a physiotherapist who specializes in chronic breathlessness gave a presentation on dysfunctional breathing in women's health. At the October 2007 meeting, a midwife spoke to us about the physiotherapist and labour, and we had a really useful question-and-answer session. Unfortunately, our Summer meeting had to be cancelled because of building work at our meeting venue.

The West Midlands area is currently in the process of organizing this year's ACPWH Conference in Solihull and we hope to see many of you there.

We plan to continue our regular meetings and are considering holding an ACPWH workshop. Suggestions for topics from our members are always welcome at meetings.

Gill Hawkins

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