

POGP Conference 2014

Introduction

The Margie Polden Memorial Bursary was set up by Martin Polden, her husband, and members of what was then called the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology to honour Margie's achievements. It provides funding for a student or newly qualified physiotherapist with an interest in this specialty to attend the organization's Annual Conference.

I was the winner of last year's award, and I have used the Gibbs' reflective cycle to write the following report.

Description

Conference was held at the Renaissance Manchester City Centre Hotel, Manchester, UK, on 19–20 September 2014. It saw the launch of the name change from the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health to Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy (POGP). The 2-day event included speakers from different allied health professions (AHPs). The first day featured various presentations. There were also stands promoting physiotherapy products to visit during the intervals, as well as a research poster competition (see pp. 60–62). A gala dinner with entertainment took place on the Friday evening. On the final day, talks ran concurrently in neighbouring rooms, making it hard to decide which to attend, and I was also presented with the Margie Polden Memorial Bursary award (Fig. 1).

Feelings

I felt very proud to have been given the opportunity to attend the POGP Annual Conference. However, I was also a little nervous, but I was quickly made to feel at ease when introduced to members of the Executive Committee. I was extremely impressed with the quality and delivery of the presentations, and felt inspired by what I had seen and heard. Meeting new people and initiating conversations was challenging because I was conscious that I might come across as naïve and inexperienced, and I had to remind myself that I was there to learn and should seize any opportunity. I was very grateful

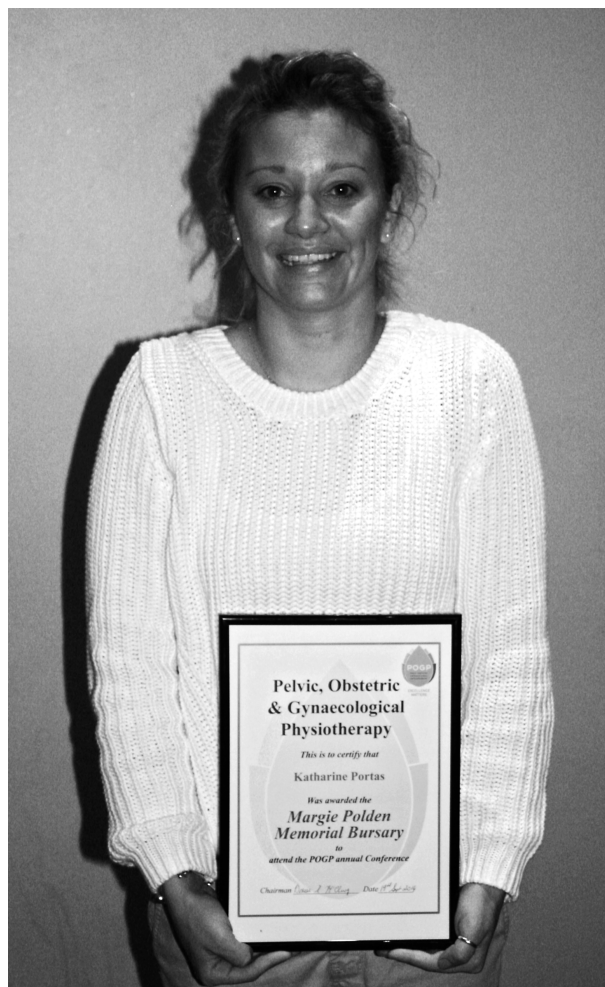


Figure 1. Margie Polden Memorial Bursary award winner Katherine Portas with her framed certificate (photograph by Shirley Bustard).

that people were so helpful and friendly towards me. After Conference, I felt more knowledgeable, and I have confidently shared what I had learned with a small group of peers at university. I have made them aware of the Margie Polden Memorial Bursary, and how beneficial being a member of POGP would be if they were interested in this specialty.

Evaluation

The 2-day Annual Conference flowed seamlessly. There was a wide variety of talks to attend, and the quality of the speakers was excellent. In particular, I found the presentations on the management of childhood incontinence, continence products and obesity very informative. I

will be able to take this forward in my forthcoming community-based role. The talks covered sensitive topics, but were delivered with a balance of humour and respect that made the presentations memorable. What struck me was the variety of different AHPs who were involved, including nurses, physiotherapists, surgeons and a psychotherapist. Ruth ten Hove, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy's head of research and development, also attended. This united front reinforced the importance of an effective multi-disciplinary team in optimizing patient outcomes. There was a particular emphasis on physiotherapy and midwifery, and the importance of the physiotherapist's role in the correct teaching of pelvic floor muscle exercises before and after childbirth.

The organizers encouraged questions and discussion, which provided a great opportunity to hear different opinions and share knowledge. This allowed individuals to gain a wider understanding of any specific questions they had about their clinical practice, and I believe that it was a great learning opportunity.

Analysis

The Annual Conference highlighted the complexity of this specialty. A change in attitude is essential following the launch of POGP and the merger of different areas. I became aware of gaps in the literature and current research, which was thought-provoking. One of the rotations that I will have in the community will be in paediatrics. I had neither been fully aware of the importance of child continence issues, nor the impact that these can have on children's development in all areas of their lives. I was also not aware of the interventions that can be implemented to improve continence in children. Having attended Conference, I now know where to obtain further guidance in this area.

Conclusions

On reflection, it might have been helpful beforehand to make contact via Facebook or e-mail with other students and recent graduates with a view to discussing the presentations over the course of the 2 days.

Conference provided me with an opportunity to refresh the knowledge I had gained at university, and updated me about the current literature. I also became aware of areas that my university modules had not covered, and issues about the quality of evidence and gaps in the literature. For example, I learned about the increasing prevalence of men seeking help with continence and/or sexual function concerns, particularly following prostate surgery.

Action plan

I will now try to seize opportunities to see urologists/gynaecologists in surgery in order to gain a deeper understanding of the procedures that are used. In future, I hope to promote the importance of the role of the physiotherapist in this area. Attending the Annual Conference was an invaluable learning experience, and I would strongly urge others to join POGP.

I will encourage future patients to be open with me, and I hope that this can be achieved by dealing with their concerns in a sensitive manner. An awareness of pelvic, obstetric and gynaecological issues is important in all areas of physiotherapy so that seamless referrals can be made in order to ensure appropriate treatment. I hope to attend POGP-accredited courses in the future.

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