

ACPWH CONFERENCE 2010

Executive Committee response to Conference discussion groups

As is practice at each Conference, discussion groups were held. Delegates were invited to join a small group facilitated by the Chairman of ACPWH. The questions posed, the comments made by members and the responses from the Chairman are given below.

Maintaining ACPWH membership

What would make you stay a member of ACPWH?

Four of the six groups regarded the *Journal* as a high priority.

Four of the six groups also mentioned that personal cost was important, i.e. there should be no increase in subscriptions, and discounts for Conference and workshops should be offered.

All groups said that they appreciate that ACPWH provides a structure for peer support, access to information and resources, networking, area representatives, and local meetings.

The following were also mentioned:

- The Association is a professional body, i.e. a clinical interest group (CIG) of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP), and therefore, sets standards.
- It provides a link to other organizations.
- Conference is organized by ACPWH.
- It provides educational courses and workshops.
- The Association validates members' continuing professional development.
- Membership of ACPWH is often mandatory for a women's health post.

Chairman's response

Thank you for this helpful list.

Recruitment of ACPWH members

The Association is considering some financial incentives as possible ways to increase the membership: please indicate which proposal you feel would be acceptable and comment

- (1) *A new member discount of 50% for the first year of membership*

Two groups were in favour, but four disagreed. A strongly held view was that this might be seen as discrimination against existing members if this policy was implemented.

- (2) *Workshop fees: non-members to pay £250, or join as a member and pay £267.70, which would include membership for the current year; members to pay £200; and for the CSP-endorsed workshop, everyone to pay, respectively, £20 more than the figures quoted above*

All groups agreed, but comments were made suggesting that this could cause administration problems by mixing training costs with annual subscriptions.

- (3) *Conference fees: should non-member Conference fees to be sufficiently higher to make joining ACPWH as a member more attractive financially?*

Two groups agreed, one agreed in principle and three groups disagreed.

- (4) *For a recently qualified physiotherapist, membership is £26 for the first two postgraduate years: should this be extended to Band 6 and 7 physiotherapists?*

There was general disagreement with this proposal because it was seen as unworkable thought to be impossible to police effectively. Existing members need to be looked after first.

Reinstatement fee

The reinstatement fee should be the equivalent of a year's subscription, i.e. £135

This proposal was overwhelmingly rejected because it was seen to impose an excessive penalty that would completely deter former members from rejoining the Association. Only the administration costs should be charged.

Several groups mentioned that they would like an easier payment method to be available, i.e. direct debit!

Chairman's response

Thank you for your comments regarding various possible financial incentives. The different options are not policy at the moment and some are clearly quite controversial. This was deliberate in order to stimulate debate and discussion.

The ACPWH Executive Committee has investigated a possible financial incentive and this is to be piloted for a short period of time. Your comments were taken into account when deciding how to implement this, and we welcome any further comments or ideas from the membership.

Incidentally, with the services and help we receive from Fitwise Management Ltd, administrative problems should be very few.

Any other business

The following topics were raised:

- There was a strong feeling that existing members should be looked after first before trying to attract new members: being a member was said to 'feel passive'.

Chairman's response

The Association exists because of its members. Members of the Executive Committee are elected by the membership to serve and work on their behalf and for women's health physiotherapy. In other words, things *are* done for the existing members, and I would hope that the majority recognize the work that the Executive do on their behalf. However, if ACPWH does not attract new members, this could have quite far-reaching consequences both for women's health physiotherapy and for physiotherapy in general. The high standard of physiotherapy within this specialty will disappear. Our voice will not be heard, and we will not be able to influence the CSP or, indeed, the Department of Health. Physiotherapy is a forward-thinking profession that embraces change and welcomes new ideas.

From a financial perspective, if we do not recruit more members and thereby bring in more revenue, then subscription charges will have to be higher.

If being a member 'feels passive', then the answer is to be nominated for and then voted onto the Executive Committee in order to become actively involved in the decision-making and the future development of the Association.

- Conference:
 - (1) There should be less talking (fewer presentations?) and more practical sessions.

Workshops could be run at Conference, and more information on and/or tasters of these courses should be made available. There should be more musculoskeletal content for members.

- (2) Virgin delegates should be identified by spots on badges and have 'welcomers', which could be a possible role for area representatives?
- (3) Acupuncture should be included in the programme.
- (4) There should be an opportunity on the second day of Conference for sole women's health workers to network.
- (5) Broader topics should be included and there should be a higher proportion of the more famous names in physiotherapy on the programme.

Chairman's response

Thank you for these comments. Part of our 3-year business/strategic plan is to look at the way in which we organize our future conferences, and a meeting was planned for early March 2011 to review this. This meeting subsequently took place on 1 March, and it was proposed that a National Conference Organizing Committee should be formed. This was then approved by the Executive, who are now asking members to join the committee. Full details are available from Fitwise.

- Website:
 - (1) The site needs to be improved because it is not user-friendly and it is difficult to log in.
 - (2) Members requested the ability to pay their subscriptions and conference fees directly online.

Chairman's response

The difficulties with our website have been noted and the Executive agrees that its existing format needs to be reviewed. Therefore, we have decided to create a microsite under the umbrella of the CSP site. Work is in progress at the moment.

- Finance:
 - (1) There should be more sponsorship for Conference.
 - (2) The value of Fitwise was questioned.

Chairman's responses

In order:

- (1) In this present economic crisis, sponsorship of any event is very difficult to come by,

despite the best efforts of the Conference Organizing Committee.

- (2) Without the support of Fitwise – and indeed, our other professional support – the Association would find it very difficult to function on nothing more than the goodwill and voluntary support of our members.
- Education:
 - (1) The Association should encourage more universities to offer MSc-level courses in women's health.
 - (2) Discounts for ACPWH members who want to attend other professional associations' conferences should be negotiated.
 - (3) A psychosexual workshop was suggested.

Chairman's responses

In order:

- (1) This comment will be referred to the Education Subcommittee (ESC) for further discussion. It may be that other universities could be encouraged to offer MSc-level courses in women's health, but it could be difficult to police the content. The two women's health courses that the Association currently recognizes for full membership both have very long and close working relationships with ACPWH, and those who run these want this to continue. It may be that this would not be so easy to establish in other universities, but it can certainly be discussed by the ESC.
- (2) Which conferences do the membership suggest? If we offer this, we would have to be prepared to reciprocate, and therefore, we have to look at the financial implications.
- (3) There is an ACPWH-approved external workshop in psychosexual counselling. This has run successfully in the past, but not enough people have been interested to make it viable more recently. It may be possible to hold the workshop again if there is enough interest from the membership.
- Miscellaneous:
 - (1) It is good to have an online version of the *Journal*, but members miss the chat-tier sections that used to be included in the printed edition. The ACPWH subscription should be reduced for anyone who writes for *JACPWH*. Short audits should be included in the *Journal*.
 - (2) Primary care trusts should be encouraged to make ACPWH membership a

requirement for all women's health posts.

- (3) The Executive Committee is elitist and exclusively made up of full-time senior National Health Service (NHS) physiotherapists.
- (4) Men are not, but should be, included in the name of the Association.
- (5) The members of the Executive Committee should be thanked very much for their work, and should be allowed to attend Conference free of charge.
- (6) Clearer guidance is needed on how to write the assignment for the CSP-endorsed workshop.
- (7) Subscription payment is difficult for overseas members: a sterling draft facility is needed.
- (8) More guidance is needed about achieving full membership via the portfolio route.
- (9) There should be stronger links with the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP).
- (10) The Association should raise the profile of women's health physiotherapy for therapy managers.
- (11) A rolling programme of workshops would help managers' budget and training planning for the year ahead.
- (12) A newsletter between the biannual editions of the *Journal* would be appreciated.
- (13) Postgraduates who are not ACPWH members should be allowed to perform vaginal examinations under supervision.

Chairman's responses

In order:

- (1) These comments will be referred to the Journal Subcommittee for further discussion.
- (2) This would need to be referred to the CSP and a joint approach would have to be adopted.
- (3) This is an interesting comment: the present Chairman of ACPWH hasn't worked in the NHS for the past 8 years and is a private practitioner in women's health physiotherapy.
- (4) This issue has been discussed in the past, and it was decided at that time that there were only a very small number of members for whom this was applicable. It can be

- reviewed again if members feel strongly about it.
- (5) No comment.
 - (6) This has been identified as problem by the ESC.
 - (7) This has been brought to the attention of Fitwise.
 - (8) No comment.
 - (9) There is a link with the ISCP through the Association being a recognized professional network (formerly CIG) of the CSP.
 - (10) See response (2) above.
 - (11) This is now in place: Teresa Cook has been appointed ACPWH Workshop Administrator.
 - (12) No comment.

- (13) There is no rule that says a postgraduate cannot carry out a vaginal examination under supervision. Indeed, how else can they become competent in that skill? There are guidelines (including CSP PA19a and b) that protect undergraduates as well. Neither do you have to be a member of ACPWH to perform an examination. What is most important is that you are sure you are properly trained in the procedure and feel competent to carry it out. If not, you are working outside your scope of practice and breaching the first directive of the CSP's Rules of Professional Conduct.

Ruth Hawkes FCSP
Chairman