

The Maternity and the Newborn Forum at the Royal Society of Medicine

The Maternity and the Newborn Forum (MNF) was established in March 1982. It was the first of a series of multidisciplinary topic-related groups that were introduced at the Royal Society of Medicine (RSM). The Forum originally represented the major 'stakeholders' in the field of care for maternity and the newborn, and all members of the council were involved in selecting the topics for meetings (RSM 2009), which featured invited speakers and also devoted a significant amount of time to open discussion. These characteristics have been maintained to a greater or lesser degree up to the present, and the multidisciplinary nature of the MNF is reflected by the diversity of health professionals involved in its activities.

In Spring 2008, I took on the somewhat daunting, but nevertheless exciting, task of stepping into Avril Hillyard's shoes as ACPWH representative at the MNF. At my first Forum meeting, it soon became clear to me what a significant contribution Avril had made and that I was going to have a lot to live up to. I also realized how invaluable an experience my participation in the MNF would be, and how much I could learn from the skill and expertise of the existing members.

The Forum holds both daytime and evening meetings on a wide variety of topics, which have ranged from 'Stress and Pregnancy' to 'New Reviews on the Safety and Quality of Maternity Care' over the past 2 years. My first major challenge was to organize a meeting based on pelvic floor dysfunction that would do justice to the high standard of previous gatherings. After months of never-ending plans and deliberation, everything came together and 'Pelvic Floor Trauma – the Silent Morbidity of Childbirth' was held in April 2009. I never realized how

challenging organizing and coordinating a meeting of this calibre could be! Nonetheless, I think that all the hard work paid off: the meeting resulted in a record turnout for a MNF evening event, largely because of the very impressive level of attendance by physiotherapists.

The next meetings to be held by the Forum will be 'Maternity Services Review – 2 Years On: Where Are We Now?' on Thursday 15 April 2010 and 'Debate: This House Believes that Labour Should Be Pain Free' on Tuesday 28 September 2010. Updates will be available on the RSM website (www.rsm.ac.uk).

For anyone interested in joining the RSM, the yearly membership is currently £165 plus a £25 initial joining fee for Associate membership. This includes association with a choice of two out of more than 50 sections, including Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Coloproctology, and Sexuality and Sexual Health. The fee also covers the use of the excellent library, which has comprehensive e-journal access, all social facilities, and a significant reduction in the cost of all meetings as well as a range of other discounted products. Please get in touch with me for further information (e-mail: Andrea.OduroYeboah@imperial.nhs.uk).

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Reference

Royal Society of Medicine (RSM) (2009) *Maternity & the Newborn Forum*. [WWW document.] URL http://www.rsm.ac.uk/academ/form_n.php