

Medico-legal Committee

This year saw the introduction of the expert witness education program. The College engaged the Australian College of Legal Medicine to conduct a two-day workshop for Fellows who were either on the Expert Witness Register or interested in joining the register. The workshop was held in Sydney at the Coroner's Court on 17 and 18 March. The first day covered a range of relevant topics including the law of evidence, the role of the expert, the legal profession's expectations of an expert witness, report writing and a review of reports prepared by the participants prior to the workshop. The second day focused on court performance, with each participant being examined in chief and cross-examined on their report in a court and before a judge. The evaluation reports indicate that the Fellows generally found this a worthwhile activity and further workshops are planned in the future.

Following the workshop the Medico-legal Committee, in consultation with the Executive, recommended to Council that the expert witness education program be split into two components:

1. Medico-legal report writing; and
2. Expert witness court performance.

Fellows need only satisfactorily complete the medico-legal report writing component to remain on the Expert Witness Register. Completion of the court performance component will be optional.

During the year I had the opportunity to speak at two legal seminars about the RANZCOG Expert Witness Register and this provided an excellent opportunity to raise the awareness of the legal profession to the Register. During the 2006 and 2007 financial year the College received 35 requests for an expert witness, significantly more than in the previous two years. There have been several articles in the medical press during the year about medical experts and it is gratifying that RANZCOG is seen as a leader amongst the medical colleges.

Dr Robert Lyneham

Chair, Medico-legal Committee

Valerie Jenkins

Manager, Fellowship Services

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Committee has an ongoing role in overseeing the development of the College CPD program. During the year a number of new CPD activities were introduced, such as the Colposcopy CD Rom, two SSRS projects as well as a range of templates to assist Fellows in maintaining a record of their CPD activities and points.¹

In the past financial year, 1523 Fellows participated in the College CPD Program and a further 38 are participating in approved overseas programs. Of the 29 Fellows randomly selected for the verification check at the end of their CPD period, 26 have successfully completed the process. During the year, 67 new Fellows entered the CPD program and 29 Fellows submitted a retirement declaration.

Clinical Indicators

The College, in collaboration with the Australian Council on Health Care Standards (ACHS) revised the RANZCOG/ACHS gynaecology clinical indicators. The range of indicator topics was expanded to reflect the broad scope of gynaecology practice. The new gynaecology indicators were released in January 2007 for use in ACHS accredited hospitals.²

The existing RANZCOG/ACHS obstetric indicator suite is currently under review.

Practice Profile

As reported in 2006, the Council agreed to introduce a practice profile of the Fellowship to provide information to the Council and Executive on the scope of practice of the Fellowship. The development phase of this project is nearing completion and is currently with the software developer. The implementation phase will commence in the latter part of 2007.

Annual Scientific Meetings

An important date on the CPD calendar is the College Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM). In October 2006, a very successful meeting was held in Perth, Western Australia. The excellent scientific and social program was well supported by the fellowship and sponsors.

In addition the Fellowship had access to a range of other College meetings, notably the Provincial Fellows meeting in Ballarat and regional meetings conducted by the local committee in New Zealand, South Australia and a joint New South Wales/Queensland meeting. These meetings offer a range of opportunities to gain access to the latest in O and G along with the opportunity to catch up with colleagues.

CPD in the Pacific

Over the last three years, the College has been trialling a CPD program for specialist obstetricians and gynaecologists in Pacific Island countries. This was funded by a grant from AusAID and has now led to 18 Pacific Island specialists being granted Associate Membership of the College with three-yearly ongoing CPD requirements.

Dr Roy Watson

Chair, Continuing Professional Development Committee

Valerie Jenkins

Manager, Fellowship Services

1. Copies can be download from the College website
<http://www.ranzcog.edu.au/fellows/cpd>

2. RANZCOG/ACHS gynaecology Clinical Indicators
<http://www.ranzcog.edu.au/fellows/prcrmactivities.shtml#Gynaecology>