

AGUM Newsletter

May 2000

The second edition of the newsletter is here! I didn't get a huge postbag from the last effort, but since a recent literary effort was rewarded with a medical journalism prize (of which more later), I won't stop yet. News titbits first!

On other parts of the website, you should find the new numbers for GU Medicine clinics. Colm hopes to have the latest version printed up for distribution as soon as possible.

Other new bits on the website are to be added; let us know what else you may find useful.

A FAQ (frequently asked questions) column is being developed. Just how long do you have to keep medical notes? What's the score about disclosing patient information to public health? If there's a question that nags you, post it to me (jan@unseenuniversity.com) and we'll put an answer together.

Do you want a discussion area? More links? Let me know!

URGENT! URGENT!

Only 4 weeks before the ever-popular "Medicine for Managers" seminar! Lectures, interactive workshops and lots of chances to network - no self-respecting manager in sexual health could afford to miss it! Wednesday 21/6/00 is the date to carve on your manager's heart - contact enquiries@ihm.org for more details- see the full program elsewhere on this site. Hurry, hurry, hurry!

The Annual General Meeting on Friday 27th October is shaping up to be a really lively meeting, too. We're having a debate on the Motion "Nurse consultants are a necessary development in GU Medicine" and we'll have a doctor/nurse team on each side of the motion. I think this may be the first time nurses have been involved in our AGM, and I hope we make them feel very welcome. Other highlights include Aidan Halligan, clinical lead in clinical governance for the NHS Executive (and a young, charming obstetrician to boot) is giving a briefing on the whole process in the NHS. We'll look at revalidation and GU Medicine. For a fresh look at our careers, Dr Carl Gray, a noted columnist in the BMJ Careers focus will entertain us with "Whose career is it anyway?" Carl is a great example of a portfolio careerist - he's a DGH histopathologist who's also a Home Office forensic pathologist, edits a journal, writes and speaks extensively on career and self development, and studied

managed healthcare systems at Harvard on an exchange visit. As with most forensic pathologists (in Yorkshire-is it national?) he has a wickedly dry sense of humour.

The booking forms are attached here, and will be posted out shortly. As with previous years, there is a small fee for the day, and CPD accreditation. Book now! The MSSVD that night is on sexual health - so make a whole day of it with the AGM.

Topics for work over the summer for the AGUM officers and regional reps include working with NHS Direct, Clinical Governance issues (a joint working group with MSSVD), guidelines for referral to GU Medicine for Chlamydia diagnosed elsewhere, and the Sexual Health strategy.

My prize for medical writing came out of the blue over Easter. I was asked to write a piece about sexual health for pathologists (now, now, they do have a sex life!) for one of their journals. This gave me pause; something not too technical, nor bawdy for fear of offence. Real stories about treating medics are, of course, verboten by our discretion and yet we all have them... In the end I invented a rather gruesome medical couple with all the sexual morals of a tomcat going through the male and female menopauses, chlamydial endometritis and primary syphilis. A riveting read, of course, for all my pathology colleagues who were trying hard to see other people in the caricatures. The journal gave prizes for medical journalism, and with such juicy material, how could I fail?

The recognition led me to consider another fairly recent event. Our unit in Wakefield celebrated its 75th anniversary, and I was fortunate to persuade Mike Waugh to lecture. The chairman of our Trust enjoyed the lecture and commented on the excellent communication skills of GU Physicians.

Over two years since those comments, despite our flashy presentation and journalistic skills, the specialty as a whole and our unit in particular are having awful problems in convincing purchasers to support the increased demands on our service. These two episodes brought out both our strengths and, I think, our weaknesses. Many of the GU docs in this country are marvellous speakers, and great writers, yet we seem inhibited by confidentiality issues in dealing with the media. I'm sure we can protect patients and still improve public awareness of the benefits of the service. And let's use the media more-we need Chlamydia on Coronation Street! A purely personal comment, of course - do you agree with me? Let me know!

Finally -a painfully beautiful memorial service was held for Maggie Godley on a perfect Spring day in rural England. The tiny village church was packed with friends

and colleagues from all over the country, and there was a substantial collection left for the Macmillan nurses. *Goodbye Maggie, our thoughts are with your family.*

Jan Clarke