



the college

Proposal for a Special Interest Group in Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Procedure for establishing a Special Interest Group:

1. Any member wishing to establish a Special Interest Group shall write to the Registrar with relevant details.
2. The Registrar shall forward the application to Council.
3. If Council approves the principle of establishing such a Special Interest Group then it will direct the Registrar to place a notice in the *Bulletin*, or its equivalent, asking members of the College to write in support of such a Group and expressing willingness to participate in its activities.
4. If at least 120 members reply to this notice, then Council shall formally approve the establishment of the Special Interest Group.

In accordance with this procedure, Council has approved a proposal for the establishment of a Special Interest Group in Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

Background to the proposal:

- Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is a growing provider of health care – and mental health care – in the UK.

- Many people with mental illness use both orthodox care and CAM.
- Irrespective of whether CAM is effective, good practice suggests that psychiatrists should be familiar with the generic issues around CAM, the specific complementary interventions used by their patients and the possibility for interactions with orthodox treatments.
- There is evidence that some complementary interventions are efficacious.
- There is a need for good research on widely-used but still untested interventions.
- In 2001, the Government responded favourably to a report by the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology, supporting recommendations for training fellowships and research, and recognising the role that CAM has within the NHS.
- Subsequently, the Department of Health called for a declaration of interests by universities in hosting Complementary Medicine Research Award Holders for Research Capacity Awards, resulting in 19 universities becoming eligible to collaborate with award applicants.
- In 'Tomorrow's Doctors', the GMC recognises that the medical undergraduate curriculum should include familiarisation with complementary therapies.

A small working group has met several times, and has established links with the Foundation for Integrated Medicine. A Medline search on mental health and CAM has been undertaken, and a session was held at the College's Annual Meeting in July 2003. Consideration is being given to a stand-alone conference in 2004–2005.

The College's Council has endorsed a proposal to establish a Special Interest Group in this area to continue and formalise this initiative.

The Special Interest Group will aim to meet regularly to consider key issues of relevance to the College and to organise seminars and conferences, to stimulate research and good practice, and to disseminate evaluation of complementary and alternative approaches in mental health. The Special Interest Group will also establish links with other interested parties including other Royal Colleges and professional associations.

Members are invited to write in support of this group and express willingness to participate in its activities. Interested members should write to the Registrar, care of Miss Sue Duncan at the College. If 120 members reply to this notice, then Council shall formally approve the establishment of this Special Interest Group.

Dr Andrew Fairbairn
Registrar

Annual General Meeting

June 2003

The 32nd Annual Meeting of the College was held at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, Edinburgh from 30 June to 3 July 2003.

Business Meeting

The Business Meeting of the Royal College of Psychiatrists was held on Wednesday, 2 July 2003 and was chaired by the President, Dr Mike Shooter. It was attended by 86 members of the College.

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in Cardiff on 27 June 2002 and published in the *Psychiatric Bulletin*, December 2002, were approved and signed.

Arising from the previous Business meeting in Cardiff, the President reported

on progress to date regarding resolutions made at the previous AGM as follows:

- The Cardiff meeting had agreed that the College resolution on China, adopted in London the previous year, should be put to the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) AGM in Yokohama in the summer of 2002. At Yokohama, the WPA agreed to set up a task force to lay down the protocol for a free and independent visit to China, to investigate the alleged political abuse of psychiatry and to report back on progress at the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in Spring 2003. At the APA meeting, the WPA issued a statement saying that it had been impossible to carry this further because of the non-cooperation of

the Chinese Government, the outbreak of SARS and the replacement of the Health Minister in its wake. It now called on the new minister to allow the investigatory visit, along the lines that the College had originally asked for.

In the light of this statement, the College joined with the APA in supporting its demands. Dr Shooter encouraged members to consider what action the College should take if China refused the visit. He would be writing to the WPA to pose the same question.

- In contrast to China, the WPA had reacted very promptly and appropriately to the situation in the Middle East. A task force, jointly chaired by Israeli and Palestinian