



FRIDAY 3 MAY 2013

Welcome to the FOM Newsletter.

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Annual Scientific Meeting, AGM and Annual Dinner - 15 May 2013, RCP, London

This is your last chance to book for the ASM, AGM and dinner. Please book using the [registration form](#) or contact Patrick Cullen on 020 3116 6910 or at: patrick.cullen@fom.ac.uk by **12 noon on Tuesday 7 May**.

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Public health lead

We have been discussing with the Faculty of Public Health the need to strengthen the links between the two disciplines, especially in the light of the new Health and Wellbeing Boards and the clinical commissioning system, and the need to ensure that account is taken of the health and health needs of the working population. We see great potential in closer collaboration.

We are expecting to involve not only the Faculty of Public Health but also the Association of Directors of Public Health and the Society of Occupational Medicine.

We are proposing initially to have an exploratory meeting to see how public health and occupational medicine might best co-operate. This will be attended by senior people from both specialties. The outcome might be some joint briefings or training, or an exercise to connect public health and occupational medicine specialists at a local level, or supporting some exemplar collaborations.

It would be helpful to have a FOM member who has an interest and experience in public health, and ideas about how we might work with public health in the new NHS structures, who would help guide FOM in this work, over the next year.

If you would be interested in applying to be FOM's public health lead, please send an email outlining your experience for, and thoughts on, this role together with a CV to nicky.coates@fom.ac.uk by **noon on Monday 20 May**. This would be an honorary role but reasonable expenses would be paid. It would be helpful if you would use the subject title 'Public health lead' in your email.

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Evidence based medicine matters

An organisation called Sense about Science has teamed up with the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges to produce a document to highlight the evidence base of medical practice. All medical colleges and faculties were invited to contribute reports about their evidence-based work. For the Faculty, the Health and Work Development Unit wrote a piece about its work on improving occupational health care for NHS staff. This and the reports from other specialties have been published in [Evidence based medicine matters](#) which was recently launched at the House of Lords.

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Minimum pricing on alcohol

The Alcohol Health Alliance UK sent a letter to the British government advising them to continue with their plans to introduce a minimum price on sales of alcohol units.

The AHA has been advising the government repeatedly about the benefits of a minimum alcohol price on alcohol sales, highlighting the reduction in hospital admissions and the immense savings to the NHS it would bring.

The Faculty is represented at the AHA, and we are supportive of their stance. The [AHA's statement to the government](#) is available on the RCP website.

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Fit note guidance

The Department of Work and Pensions has recently revised its fit note guidance, three years after it was launched to replace the sick note. The updates reflect that the fit note is no longer a new concept, and should help people to utilise it to its full potential. Professional bodies have been closely involved in developing the new content of the fit note, and feedback from employers, doctors and patients has also been used in developing the revisions. The revised guidance clarifies for patients and employers that the fit note is about someone's general fitness for work, allowing maximum flexibility to discuss what changes could help someone to work.

The guidance also includes examples of the fit note being used in challenging situations, ideas for patients and employers about possible changes to accommodate the advice in the fit note, and a more comprehensive further resources section.

Dr Bill Gunnyeon, Chief Medical Adviser for the Department of Work and Pensions, says: *The fit note can be a valuable tool to help people return to work quickly and avoid long term absence and potential job loss – this revised guidance helps doctors, employers and patients use it to its full potential.*

The revised guidance for employers, patients and GPs is available at: www.dwp.gov.uk/fitnote

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HSE response to RIDDOR consultees

The Health and Safety Executive has recently completed a consultation, *Proposals to Revise the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (as amended) (RIDDOR '95)*.

The consultation was launched to research industry response to proposals to simplify the procedures for reporting accidents and dangerous occurrences in the workplace, potentially removing the obligation to report certain workplace accidents. When the consultation was announced, the Faculty had serious reservations about removing the reporting requirement for cases of occupational disease, and specifically counselled against this proposal.

In light of the extensive and vociferous industry feedback to the consultation, the HSE has now modified its proposed amendments to RIDDOR, recommending that companies should still be obligated to report workplace occurrences of six key industrial diseases, representing over 90% of those which are currently reported.

The Faculty is delighted that the HSE has taken into account the advice of industry professionals in modifying its proposed amendments. The Faculty strives to promote good practice in occupational health, and will endeavour to advise against any proposals which could diminish the protection of employee health in the workplace.

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With best wishes



Nicky Coates
Chief Executive

