



TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2011

Welcome to the FOM Newsletter.

### In this issue...

#### **Introduction to the Training Newsletter**

This is the first of a new six monthly Training Newsletter, put together by the Director of Training and Trainee Representative on the Board. It is aimed at keeping all those involved in specialty training up to date with developments and I do hope you will find it of help. We welcome any feedback, comments and items for future issues, which should be sent to the Training Co-ordinator, Emma Dawson at: [emma.dawson@facocmed.ac.uk](mailto:emma.dawson@facocmed.ac.uk).

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#### **From the Director of Training: Dr Ian Aston**

This newsletter is about specialty training in occupational medicine and is aimed at trainees who are working towards successful award of Membership (MFOM) and their trainers (Educational Supervisors and Clinical Supervisors). There will be a regular section from the Trainee Representative on the Faculty Board, currently Dr Hazem Gallagher-Alagha.

We will aim in these newsletters to advise both trainees and trainers on how to achieve successful outcomes; remind you of important matters concerning training; and also alert you to any changes introduced by the General Medical Council (GMC). Medical training does not stand still and the GMC, which supervises all postgraduate training in the UK, does bring in changes to regulations, from time to time, and clarifies interpretation of current regulations. The newsletter will relay the implications of any important changes in occupational medicine.

I would like to remind trainees that the Faculty seeks to be as helpful as possible to you through your training and so please do ask if you need information or advice, and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many trainers all round the country who support their trainees through the important years of specialty training.

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#### **GMC clarification on examinations taken prior to training**

The GMC has recently helpfully clarified an issue which the Faculty has been addressing for some time. The GMC stated in April 2011 that doctors who are in specialty training, or enter specialty training by 31 October 2013, will be able to have any valid passes in previously approved professional examinations counted towards a CCT, even if they were obtained outside approved training.

This means there will be no need for doctors, who have passed the Diploma in Occupational Medicine within five years of entering specialty training, to take the Part 1 MFOM examination. This is under the current MFOM regulations. The GMC is still consulting on how long the examination passes are valid for and also the number of attempts a candidate can have.

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## **Dissertations: the need for careful checking and high quality presentation**

As you will be aware, an essential part of training is the Faculty's acceptance of a written piece of work demonstrating competency in research methods. The Faculty appoints two assessors who jointly assess the quality of the dissertation (or equivalent evidence) to determine if the work achieves MFOM standards. The responsibility for determining the admissibility and adequacy of dissertations lies with the Chief Examiner (Research Methods). The Faculty's Chief Examiner is currently Dr Kate Venables, supported by Dr Richard Preece as Deputy Chief Examiner.

Once assessed, dissertations may need to be modified as a result of the comments from the assessors. Often these are minor changes. However, some of the assessors' comments state that written work submitted has contained gross spelling errors, errors in page numbering or referencing, and generally very poor presentation. Dissertations with these faults will automatically need revision. Trainees should make every effort to avoid submitting a poorly-presented dissertation; fluency and clarity in written work is a key competency for occupational physicians.

There has also been a recent significant increase in the number of dissertations which require major modifications. This suggests that some trainees may not have absorbed the feedback from their protocol reviewers, or may not have had adequate advice about posing clear questions and obtaining and presenting evidence to support their answers. Inevitably, major revisions need a full reassessment and the outcome (pass or fail) is always uncertain.

Educational supervisors have a key role to play in encouraging and guiding their trainees with their submission of a satisfactory dissertation. A dissertation which requires revision is disappointing and time-consuming and will delay the trainee's progress which in turn is likely to delay the award of MFOM and subsequently CCT. Specialty occupational medicine training relies heavily on the expertise of, and supervision by, the trainer, and trainers are asked to consider how they might best help their trainee avoid the need for dissertation revisions.

The Faculty has produced guidance to help trainees and educational supervisors ensure that dissertations are well prepared and well presented at the first submission. Further details are available at:

<http://www.facoccmmed.ac.uk/library/docs/t-rdissguid.pdf>

In addition, the Faculty is organising a workshop aimed at dissertation assessors and trainers, focusing on the principles of assessment for examining the MFOM dissertation. The event is due to take place in London on 12 March, 2012 and further information about the day is being emailed directly to assessors and trainers. We are also planning a workshop for trainees, which will focus on study design and analysis for the MFOM dissertation. It will primarily be aimed at those trainees in the early stages of planning their dissertation. It will be held on Tuesday 24 April, 2012 at the Faculty's office and further details will be available early in the new year.

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## **Part 2 MFOM Examination: advice to candidates**

The Part 2 MFOM examination was introduced in 2010 and is an exit examination, designed to test some of the competencies set out in the OM curriculum. The standard expected is that of a specialist in occupational medicine capable of independent practice. The various components of the examination are designed to test as follows:

- MCQ (Multiple Choice Question) paper: primarily a test of factual knowledge, with some testing the ability to apply knowledge
- MEQ (Modified Essay Question) paper: a test of the ability to apply factual knowledge
- OSPE (Observed structured practical examination): a test of clinical skills and clinical competencies including communication skills.

The second diet of the Part 2 MFOM examination was held in June 2011 in Sheffield. Exactly 50% of the candidates were successful overall. Feedback from the examiners on the candidates' performance has highlighted some areas where the candidates in general performed poorly and we thought it would be helpful to alert future candidates to this.

The main areas of poor performance were;

- Modified Essay Questions

Some sections of the MEQ were answered poorly; in particular, the clinical question on Myasthenia Gravis and the question on health and safety legislation.

- Objective Structured and Physical Examination: skills in the Short Cases

The fact that the clinical examination section of the OSPE examination, and short cases in particular, were not done well concerned the examiners, the Chief Examiners and Director of Assessment. Clinical examination techniques overall was the main area of weakness identified. Since this examination is an exit examination, consideration needs to be given by educational supervisors and others to enhanced training in this area, possibly as elements in workplace based assessments (WBAs).

- Photographic Material (part of the OSPE)

Occupational hygiene is an important part of the OM curriculum and is tested in the photographic section. Candidates need to ensure that they give sufficient time to this important topic during their examination preparations.

In summary, therefore, candidates for the next examination are strongly advised that they are well practised and competent in these important areas, as identified in the OM curriculum.

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## **Sharing of trainee information**

The Faculty has recently reviewed its processes for protecting personal data and takes this opportunity to clarify that, whilst information about trainees may be shared with the GMC, Deanery and your trainer, no personal information will be passed to commercial organisations.

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## **From the Trainee Representative: Dr Hazem Gallagher-Alagha**

I am currently trainee representative on the Faculty Board. I have been passionate

about improving communication between the Faculty and trainees, since I started my training in 2008.

As your representative, I am happy to discuss any issues in confidence, either through e-mail: [hazemalagha@hotmail.com](mailto:hazemalagha@hotmail.com) or telephone 07775 672363. So please do not hesitate to contact me.

In this edition I want to focus on the benefits trainees receive from the FOM and introduce the new team of staff looking after your training from registration to CCT. In addition, my training is due to end in 2012 and therefore the Faculty will be seeking a new trainee representative to take over in May 2012, more details are below.

Although trainees are not full Members of the FOM, they do receive the same benefits as full members:

- Access to all relevant Faculty documents via the Faculty's website
- Regular updates on occupational health and medicine issues, through our electronic newsletter
- A comprehensive review of the Faculty's work and plans, through the Annual Report
- Access to the members' area on the Faculty website
- Eligibility for the annual Wilf Howe Memorial Prize awarded for an innovation in the workplace
- Advance notice of new publications
- A discounted price for new publications
- Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM). (OEM is an international peer reviewed journal concerned with areas of current importance in occupational medicine and environmental health issues throughout the world, which the Faculty has adopted as its official journal. It is recommended reading for all trainees)
- Invitation to meetings organised by the Faculty
- Attending and voting at the Annual General Meeting in May of each year
- Participation in the election of the Trainee Representative on the Faculty Board and the opportunity to participate in other ways

Following the departure of some members of the Education and Training team to pastures new, the Faculty recruited three new members of staff over the summer, their names, roles and contact details are outlined below.

- **Sara Shortt** – Training Co-ordinator, Dissertations and CPD.  
Telephone: 020 3116 6902 and email: [sara.shortt@facocmed.ac.uk](mailto:sara.shortt@facocmed.ac.uk)
- **May Elphinstone** – Examination Co-ordinator.  
Telephone: 020 3116 6903 and email [may.elphinstone@facocmed.ac.uk](mailto:may.elphinstone@facocmed.ac.uk)
- **Emma Dawson** – Training Programme Co-ordinator.  
Telephone: 020 3116 6904 and email: [emma.dawson@facocmed.ac.uk](mailto:emma.dawson@facocmed.ac.uk)

Please remember that staff are happy to help you and should be easily reachable.

Finally, I will be the trainee representative until May 2012; I do not anticipate standing again, as my training is due to end later in 2012. The Faculty will be seeking to recruit a new trainee representative on the Board and the position will be advertised in

January 2012. If you would like to learn more about the role, you are welcome to contact me.

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## **Diary dates**

Dates of forthcoming examinations:

### **Part 2 MFOM Examination**

The next sitting of the Part 2 MFOM examination will be in February 2012, the closing date for this has just passed. Given the examination runs every eight months, the next written examination is due to take place on Monday 24 September, in London and the Clinical examination is set to take place on Tuesday 9 October at the Sheffield Northern General Hospital. Further details will be added to the Faculty's website.

### **Part 1 MFOM Examination**

The next sitting of the Part 1 MFOM examination will take place on Monday 28 May 2012 at Hamilton House, London. The closing date to enter for this examination is Monday 26 March at 5 00 pm. Further details can be found on the Faculty's website at:

<http://www.facocmed.ac.uk/edtrain/diplomas/docmed.jsp>

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With best wishes



Nicky Coates  
Chief Executive

