Update on National School of Occupational Health

Welcome to the December 2016 Edition of the National School of Occupational Health (NSOH) Newsletter.

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**For your calendar**

- **NSOH School Conference**
  ‘What Works for Wellbeing’ | 26th January 2017 at Holborn Bars, 136-142 Holborn, London, EC1N 2NQ

- **Next Trainee, Supervisor and NSOH Board meeting**
  Friday 28th April 2017 within the North West, location to be confirmed. Further details will be sent out in the new year.

- **National recruitment details for Occupational Medicine** will be available here once released: [www.oriel.nhs.uk](http://www.oriel.nhs.uk)

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**NSOH Updates**

In October, the NSOH Board held their meeting in Kegworth, Derbyshire. The Board met with Trainees and Trainers in the morning, building on the meeting held in Birmingham in February of this year. It was great to meet Trainees and Supervisors from the local area and hear what they had to say about Occupational Medicine (OM) training. Our next meeting with Trainees and Supervisors will be in the North West on 28th April 2017, and we hope as many OM Trainees and Trainers as possible are able to join us on this date.

On 29th November, we met with OH Nursing Practice Teachers, and held the first national Focus Group for Practice Teachers. The event brought together Practice Teachers from across the country and the discussions and insights from the day will inform a future quality management strategy for educating the OH professionals of today and tomorrow.

The next NSOH conference will be on 26th January 2017, at Holborn Bars, Central London. ‘What Works for Wellbeing’ will give participants the opportunity to hear from a wide range of Occupational Health leaders who are actively involved in building the evidence base and delivering the interventions that work. This is a multidisciplinary conference open to all Trainees, Trainers and Practitioners working in Occupational Health. We have had an amazing response to the conference and are running a waiting list already. If you would like to be added to the waiting list, please click [here](http://www.oriel.nhs.uk) to register.

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**Lets not make a drama out of crisis...**

There is a crisis in the Occupational Medicine workforce, according to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health. They don’t hold back: In their report published last month, they remind us that the UK loses 27 million working days every year through work-related accidents and illness, and that our (more enlightened?) European neighbours Holland have fifteen times as many OM specialists per head of population than we do. To rub salt into the wound, they have noticed that the number of OM trainees in the UK has fallen by two-thirds since 2003, and that nearly two-thirds of the current OM workforce is aged over 50 and therefore likely to be considering retirement in the next 10 years. So our problem is not that we are in the mire, but that the depth is so great we can’t climb out without substantial changes in the way the profession is organised and trained. To reach the numbers of occupational health practitioners recommended in the report, we will need to increase the number of trainees by a factor of three or four, which will be a difficult ask for all of us.

The Board of the National School of Occupational Health is developing a plan in response to the training challenges that face us, and we are confident that the OH community will be able to respond positively to the challenge. At our ‘What works for Wellbeing’ conference in January, we will be able to update you on the latest progress.

So let’s not make a drama out of this crisis, let’s just get on and sort it out.

**Jeremy Webster**

Chair of National School of Occupational Health Board
Well, I've been in post since 1st April 2016 to support and develop mutually beneficial positive working relationships and communication with physicians involved in training (Clinical Supervisors, Educational Supervisors, Regional Specialty Advisers and Training Programme Directors) for both the industrial/NHS training environments within England.

I have had the opportunity to meet and share positive ideas with the Defence Deanery and I look forward to collaborating with the devolved counties, i.e. Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, sharing best practice in order to support trainees. The future accredited specialists of tomorrow should be assisted in developing the necessary skills, to respond to the changing needs of the workplace, whilst working as part of multi-professional Occupational Health services with a shared common purpose for supporting the workforce and the world of business.

What I bring is 21 years of full-time occupational health experience having previously worked as a GP in the East Midlands. In the last 10 years I have been an Educational Supervisor, Training Programme Director (TPD), FOM appointed External Assessor of Training Posts, MFOM examiner and a member of a higher specialist training committee working with TPD’s from other medical specialities. I have significant experience of working with trainees in difficulty both within our speciality and all branches of medicine. My current post is part of a four Consultant Occupational Health Team within the NHS in Leicester and I have experience in both chairing and delivering service and educational initiatives.

Ensuring that we have workable quality governance training standards across the different training environments for both the Trainer and Trainee is one of my priorities. It is important that we as a National School continue to foster the excellent local intelligence, educational opportunities and expertise available to us within local HEE teams moving forward, as well as exploring what Trainees and Trainers feel would assist in their professional development and future ongoing education. This will need to be balanced against both the Health Education England and GMC quality standards.

I look forward to working with you.

Dr Harj Kaul  | National Training Programme Director
Occupational Medicine Training: An Industry Trainee Perspective

Dr Sahira Spurlock | ST5 Occupational Medicine Trainee and Industry Trainee Representative

Training in Occupational Medicine is unusual by virtue of the fact that it can be in the NHS or industry, unlike other specialties. Recruitment into industry operates slightly differently to the NSOH national recruitment process for NHS posts. Vacancies are usually advertised via BMJ careers or the Society of Occupational Medicine website when they become available. Interviews are held locally by the recruiting company; however appointments are now required to be benchmarked by the NSOH. The training, as for non-industry posts, is 4 years with yearly ARCPs now managed by the NSOH.

Industry trainees are funded by the company rather than HEE, and are generally paid more than in the NHS. This can be an advantage as the drop in income can be an issue for many trainees. On the whole industry trainees tend to do slightly more service provision than in the NHS, but this varies depending on the employing company. There is usually a more generous study budget, and funding of the Advanced Diploma in Occupational Medicine. Some companies even pay for the MFOM exams. In most posts you would be expected to do a fair amount of travelling, which can be a good chance to get out to different workplaces, but can also eat into your personal time. The advantage of training in industry is the more varied exposure and access to different workplaces than training in the NHS alone.

I’m currently half way through my training and work for a privately-owned OH provider based in the North-West. Our contracts include everything from large public sector organisations like the NHS, fire service and police through to construction, manufacturing, and the food sector to name but a few. As well as case management we are involved in a variety of other activities, such as appointed doctor work, medics such as offshore and rail, and MRO work. There is also the opportunity to be involved in activities such as planning and setting up health surveillance programmes; for example we recently set up biological monitoring for nickel in a glass manufacturer. There is also the opportunity to learn about the running an OH business, including pitching and managing contracts.

Overall, training in industry has been a positive experience and has given me the chance to get exposure to different workplaces, which can be an issue in some posts. Hopefully going forward there will be more opportunity for trainees to spend time in industry, as this is an invaluable experience in preparation for a career in Occupational Medicine.

We welcome your feedback and any questions you may have, including those regarding any of the topics in this edition. Please contact us via NationalSchoolOccHealth@nwl.hee.nhs.uk. For more detailed information about the School and its work, please visit our website at www.lpmde.ac.uk/training-programme/specialty-schools/occupational-medicine