Annual Meeting of Fellows – Dean’s Report

Change

Last year was a year of change: RSM has a new President, Sir Simon Wessely and new Chief Executive, Mrs Helen Gordon. Both significant events in the world of the RSM. But other, and perhaps more profound changes are planned for a future which is already here. Following work which started with a Council Awayday in 2016, and accelerated by Helen Gordon, RSM in consultation with over 200 participants – external and internal, RSM members and non-members, doctors at all career stages and other health care professionals – has developed an RSM Educational Strategy which was approved in January 2018 by RSM Council. Implementation of the strategy will require different ways of working across the whole of the RSM. The aim is to build from the RSM’s unique heritage a platform for the future continued success of the RSM as an educational provider.

But whilst the work of strategy development was underway, RSM Academic Department continued to work as usual and organised with RSM Sections and others 369 meetings on topics reflecting the work of most of the recognised specialities and attracting delegates from many medical disciplines and from other healthcare professionals.

RSM Sections

RSM Sections are at the heart of the Society and responsible for almost 80% of RSM educational programmes. I want to start this report to RSM Fellows, as last year, by acknowledging the huge amount of work contributed to the RSM by Section Presidents, their councils and their colleagues and thanking this “voluntary faculty” for their contribution to the RSM and its educational work.

The academic year 2016/7 was again successful in terms of the number of Section meetings, the range of topics covered and the numbers of attendees. About 27,000 people came to meetings at the RSM of which about 20,000 were to meetings run through RSM Sections. Sixty percent of attendees were not RSM Fellows. This is an important statistic as it demonstrates both the reach and the relevance of these meetings to all colleagues.

Most but not all RSM meetings focus on the specialist or technical aspects of care. But team working and leadership continue, appropriately, to be to part of some Sections’ programmes. RSM Open ran a meeting on high-performance team-working and RSM Patient Safety ran a meeting focusing on transforming the hospital into a learning organisation.

A landmark event, reported by “BBC futures” and other media outlets, was “Social Media: challenges and benefits for mental health and well-being” organised by RSM Psychiatry. This raised a current concern within medicine and the public about the impact of active use of social media. And this year, healthcare consequences of Brexit, the political issue of the day, was considered by three sections, RSM Geriatrics and Gerontology; RSM Trainees and RSM Occupational medicine.

Academic Fund

RSM Sections each year contribute to a Fund that supports International Speakers contributing to RSM meetings; underwrites small “niche” meetings and supports one or two RSM Visiting Professorships. Last year, the Fund supported 18 international speakers who presented at meetings organised by 17 of our 54 Sections. These speakers included Dr Bruce Miller from San Francisco who spoke at a programme titled “Radical change; a blueprint for the 50 years of dying”, celebrating 50 years of the hospice movement jointly organised by RSM Palliative care, St Christopher’s Hospice and Hospice UK;
Professor Carol Swallow from Canada who spoke at a gastro-intestinal study day jointly organised by RSM Coloproctology and RSM Surgery. Small meetings that were supported by the Fund included a meeting organised by RSM Intellectual Disability that explored the recent advances in the management of diabetes in people with intellectual disabilities.

Last year RSM asked speakers supported through the Academic Fund to consider giving a “Masterclass” for Trainees. We hear that this is popular both with Trainees and also with the speakers.

**Working across Sections and with other partners.**

The RSM is keen to encourage collaboration both internally between Sections and externally with partner organisations. As an organisation that is multi-disciplinary and increasingly multi-professional, the RSM is well positioned to bring together disciplines and professions to discuss and debate topics relevant to their combined work. This year “cross-sectional working” included a day discussing “Obesity science, food and waistlines” supported by RSM Paediatrics and Child Health and RSM Endocrinology and Diabetes. In addition the RSM ran 95 meetings in collaboration with external organisations including the Royal College of Anaesthetics, the Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health and the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Crown Prosecution Service and St Christopher’s Hospice.

**RSM Spotlight events**

Being able to respond quickly to current controversies, events or concerns is one of the aims of the RSM Educational Strategy (see below). This year the RSM hosted three successful “Spotlight” events. The first in April “Patient Safety, litigation against doctors and gross negligence manslaughter” examined many aspects of this tough and fraught topic and included contributions from Sir Robert Francis and Mr David Sellu, whose manslaughter conviction was reversed on appeal.

“Talk NHS: a public debate on the NHS past, present and future”, co-hosted with “Discourse” and chaired by Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, featured a contribution from Professor Stephen Hawking and discussion with panellists including Nigel Edwards of the Nuffield Trust and Liz McNulty of the Patients Association. The meeting prompted much passion, media attention and twitter activity – 700 posts and nearly 2 million impressions.

Later in the year, RSM brought together representatives from the emergency services that responded to the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London. It was humbling to hear contributions from doctors and nurses, senior and junior, and from the fire and police services, including Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick, who had all clearly worked so well and so hard together, reflect on the lessons learned and the changes they have already made so that their care and co-ordination would be better in the future.

**Global Health**

Last year was the first year of the RSM’s Global Health Partnership with King’s College London and RSM Global Health hosted an interesting groups programme based around three themes: Emergencies, Education and “Big issues”. Events included the first Global Surgery Summer School, a very successful two-day event that brought together over 100 participants, including students and trainees and global health advocates; a conference organised in partnership with UK Sierra Leone Health Partnerships and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health that discussed health “post-Ebola”; as well as a conference on Global Aging.
Public Engagement

Events designed to involve patients and the public are an important part of RSM’s annual programme. “Medicine and Me”, flagship events generously supported by anonymous donors, are at the heart of RSM’s patient engagement work. Organised in conjunction with a relevant patient charity, these provide a forum where patients come together with specialists to discuss their care: it is clear that the specialists learn as much if not more than their patients. Last year, RSM’s charity partners included the Sickle Cell Society, UK Sepsis Trust, PCOS UK and Verity-PCOS the Marfan Association UK, the British Lung Foundation, the Proteus Family Network, UK and Fifth Sense.

Evening lectures, open to the public continue to be hugely successful. Matthew Syed, columnist for the Times, gave the Easter Lecture where he discussed “Creating a high performance revolution in health care”; this years’ Jephcott Lecturer, Baroness Hayman, gave a unique personal perspective on health care as she shared her wide experience and insights gained as a “lay representative” working within health care in a range of circumstances; and the Royal Society of Arts and RSM collaboration continues to flourish, last year Conrad Shawcross RA examined his fascination with themes of science.

Supporting career choice,

The RSM is a place for everyone at any stage of their career in health care starting with those who aspire to a career in medicine or the healthcare professions. RSM held three regional events that attracted over 500 school students with their teachers and advisors who were able to hear about and discuss the opportunities that a career in medicine offers. Hard career decisions and difficult choices continue well after medical school. The RSM Annual Speciality Careers Fair was also popular and attracted a mix of students and Foundation and Core Trainees who were able to discuss the pros and cons of possible career choices with experts.

Looking forward; RSM Educational Strategy and its implementation

Change at the RSM has in the past been largely incremental. But today we face a series of circumstances that significantly challenge both how we work and our readiness to continue to be one of the main providers of CPD. It is crucial, if the RSM is to remain a relevant and significant provider of CPD and be a voice in today’s world of healthcare education, that we modernise the content, delivery and scope across RSM educational programmes. In the increasingly stressed and stretched environments of health and social care, both time and funding for CPD are very limited and so more precious than ever. RSM education must respond to this challenge, work with today’s connected world and take up the opportunities offered by application of digital technologies to education. These challenges will be met through a necessarily ambitious strategy.

RSM educational strategy has six themes: the development of “RSM Learning” as an educational “Hub” and resource; involving patients and the public; increasing the use of digital technologies; expanding RSM’s support for innovation; becoming a partner to and, underpinning all of this, making the necessary internal organisational changes to enable and drive RSM’s ambition to be a leading provider of CPD.

Ensuring RSM Sections continue to deliver excellent learning is a central feature of the strategy and some of the organisational changes that are planned will increase and improve the support that RSM provides for Section Presidents and their councils. “RSM Learning” will focus on content and product development and allow the RSM to respond quickly to any relevant controversial and challenging issues linked to education and learning in health care. The work of implementing the strategy is phased over 3 ½ years and is starting right now.
Thank you

Educational programmes are generated through the Academic Department. But their success depends also on input from many other parts of the RSM: Marketing, Library Services, Facilities and AV, fundraising and, of course, Finance. I would like to end this report by thanking my colleagues across all RSM departments for their continuing and vital support of the work of the Academic Department and in particular to acknowledge their contributions to the development of the RSM Educational strategy and their commitment to their roles in its implementation.

Dr Fiona Moss
Dean RSM
@RSM_Dean
February 2018