



# Newsletter

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## Ensuring international engagement of clinical skills is aligned with national priorities



Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that my role as lead clinician for the Managed Educational Network would find me on flight SA 613 to Malawi in March this year. Although the week-long scoping exercise to identify the Continuing Professional Development needs of clinical officers in Malawi was undertaken as part of my university post, it became increasingly clear that what I had been learning over the last year in this role was both transferable and relevant.

### Health care problems in Malawi

Malawi has a population of just over 12.2 million people which is currently increasing at a rate of 2% per year. It is one of the poorest countries in the world. The major diseases include malaria, HIV, TB and road traffic accidents. There is only one ENT surgeon and 9 orthopaedic surgeons to serve 12.2 million people and the medical school currently produces 60 graduates annually. Health care is delivered through 4 central hospitals and approximately 20 district general hospitals run by the Ministry of Health and some health care facilities are run by the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAMS) with often better standards of funding and therefore higher standards of care.

Despite the many obvious differences between Scotland and Malawi, it was immediately apparent that variation in standards of skills practice impacted on the outcomes of patients and that there was unnecessary duplication of effort where skills training was being delivered in relation to both health-care practitioners and geographical access, with rural areas suffering most from a lack of educational opportunities.

I'd like to share with you some of the plans we have to support this essential Scottish Malawi link with a project taken on by the University of St Andrews under the leadership of Dr David Corner. He has been excellent in identifying the strategic developments required to ensure long-term quality improvement, both in training and delivery of high-quality care by making the appropriate links with higher education institutions in Scotland and Malawi. Through the Managed Educational Network database and the Scottish Clinical Skills Network chaired by Rona Patey, we will be able to help ensure the right expertise for CPD for clinical officers is efficiently delivered.

### Aims of the project

The aim of the project is to deliver education and training that provides consistent highly-skilled clinical officers to deliver safe health care irrespective of geographic location. The front line clinical staff in the health care system are clinical officers at both secondary and tertiary levels. Clinical officers receive a 3-year training programme and then a supervised internship. There are 3 specialist clinical officer programmes in anaesthetics, orthopaedics and ophthalmology which require additional studies.

There is increasing recognition of the need to support CPD for clinical officers in Malawi recognizing the crucial role they play in the delivery of health care in the district general hospitals in the four regions to ensure a better quality of care for patients. To ensure long-term sustainability it is essential that a series of short CPD courses is developed in partnership with the Colleges of Health Sciences and College of Medicine in Malawi. The areas identified include: Health service management and leadership skills; clinical skills updates; training the trainer courses; and personal and professional development. These courses need to be linked to key government health initiatives to deliver standards of care whilst also enabling clinical officers to be rewarded through an emerging career structure with transparent achievable guidelines for progression. Additionally, to ensure the continued innovation and development of CPD programmes for this crucial cadre of health care practitioners will require the establishment of a network of clinical officers and a faculty of clinical officer trainers to provide essential sustainable quality systems.

### What we can do

We can help by developing a coordinated approach to CPD requirements for clinical officers; identifying through a forum the expertise available to deliver required CPD; developing a network of clinical officers in Malawi; linking in with other Malawi government priorities; and developing a sustainable model of CPD delivery for Clinical officers.

If you're interested in this project, please get in touch with me: [j.s.ker@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:j.s.ker@dundee.ac.uk)

Jean Ker

## Spotlight on the regions

### From Anna O'Neill

West Consortia



As Regional Champion for the West of Scotland I hosted a regional meeting in Glasgow on 16th April with representatives from Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing & Radiography, HEIs and Health Boards. This was a group that

did not normally meet in such a forum and the meeting led to some key relationships being developed.

There was enthusiastic support for a number of key areas for development, namely the reduction in duplication of training, potentially through the creation of a clinical skills passport; sharing information about good practice; Quality Assurance processes; and the role of the mobile unit.

People were very interested in the Unit and questions were asked about how to book it and how to train staff to use it. Three members of the Paediatric Retrieval Team from Glasgow Sick Kids were able to provide first hand information, as they had already used the unit several times to run their Paediatric Outreach Study day. They were enthusiastic and positive about their experience of the unit and this was reflected in the meeting, with discussions now ongoing in relation to the unit visiting venues in the West region.

The access to the standardised teaching packages was warmly received. Following on from the meeting there have been further communications in person and electronically. A further outcome was that I was invited to speak at an evening meeting of the Glasgow Out of Hours service, where I outlined the role of the CS MEN and what it had to offer GPs in rural areas of the West.

Key to this work is a focus on multidisciplinary working and establishing relationships both virtual and non-virtual, as well as an emphasis on the non-technical aspects of clinical skills that we have the potential to support.

I plan for this group to meet again later in the year and look forward to continuing to build the network in the West with those of you I've already met and hopefully some new colleagues too! I can be contacted at [aonei001@clinmed.gla.ac.uk](mailto:aonei001@clinmed.gla.ac.uk)

### From Jerry Morse

North Consortia



Since the last newsletter, I've had a really busy and productive time in my role of Regional Champion for the North which has taken me the length and breadth of my region, from Dunblane to Shetland.

I gave a presentation on the CS MEN to delegates at the NES annual Out of Hours Conference held in Dunblane and with Jeanette's help we were also able to showcase the mobile unit. In Shetland I facilitated training to show local faculty and educators how to use the unit and its wide range of simulation equipment to maximise educational experience. Facilitating these sessions was a pleasure and those being trained included stakeholders, hospital staff, GPs, paramedics, firemen and the search and rescue team who subsequently ran sessions on the unit. I have also spoken to Charlie Siderfin and met with Peter Gent from Orkney to provide input to the programme for the unit's current visit to Orkney and I again provided facilitation on how to use the equipment.

The mobile unit also spent three days at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. This was an opportunity to show those who may be teaching in remote areas the equipment at first hand, and to build awareness of the CS MEN. Whilst it was in Aberdeen we were also able to install mobile broadband on the unit and perform some other IT "tweaking jobs" which had become necessary over the past few months in response to users' comments, and for that I thank Ben the Clinical Skills technician.

The region has also contributed the first draft of the skills pack on Suturing, which was kindly written by Prof Ron Keenan and has since had input from others in the region and further afield for the QA process. This has now been used by NHS Shetland on the unit and the most valuable feedback of all - from the end user - is being evaluated. After the QA process is complete, the pack will be available for use by all in Scotland via the NHS Shared Learning portal. If you would like to contribute to reviewing the pack, please contact me at [jerry.morse@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:jerry.morse@abdn.ac.uk).

### From Janet Skinner

South and East Consortia (includes D&G)



A fair bit of last year was spent building a database of local contacts, clinical skills courses and packs that are available within the region. We also wrote a best practice multiprofessional chest drain pack, which is

currently being used on the mobile unit. If you would like a copy of this pack, please contact either myself or the CS MEN office.

The mobile skills unit visited Stranraer in March where it was used to deliver some Paediatric Retrieval teaching, and visited the Borders in May. It will also pay an urban visit in the region to the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh on 11th August, at which point we will be holding an open day for anyone who is interested in coming along to see the unit and its facilities.

At the National Clinical Skills meeting in November last year we discussed local clinical skills issues within three workshops. Within the short term outcomes workshop the group decided that there was a real need to develop a resource that could be shared across the region on 'First Contact Skills'. The group felt that this should encompass aspects of caring, communication, how to approach patients and other generic skills that are common to all healthcare providers. It was agreed to try and produce a clinical skills teaching pack and a workshop later in the year on first patient contact skills and I am happy to co-ordinate this. However, looking at our database of packs and courses in South and East Scotland I am aware that there are many packs out there that may have some relevant content. If anyone is interested in becoming involved in the development of the pack or the workshop or has any skills packs that you think might be relevant, then please contact me on [Janet.Skinner@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Janet.Skinner@ed.ac.uk).

Many thanks to all of you from the region who have enthusiastically participated in the Clinical Skills Managed Educational Network over the last year and I look forward to working closely with you in the future.

## Showcasing the mobile unit

Now that the first visits of the mobile unit have been successfully completed, we are looking to build the number of faculty from urban centres who are interested in delivering skills education in rural areas through the unit.

As the summer is here and the school holidays place a limit on the number of staff able to be released for training, there are opportunities to showcase the mobile unit in urban areas.

Staff and visitors will be able to view the unit at Ninewells Hospital in Dundee on 24th June and at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary in Little France on 11th August. It has already been showcased at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary/University of Aberdeen in April and will be in Glasgow at the Scottish Clinical Skills Network Conference on 10th & 11th September. Whilst it is specifically funded for providing education in remote and rural areas of Scotland, there is plenty of interest from urban practitioners in this pioneering project.

### HELP POINT

For more details of the visits, and opening times, visit our website at [www.csmen.ac.uk](http://www.csmen.ac.uk)