

## **Review of the 2011 SMHRN Scientific Meeting**

The Scottish Mental Health Research Network hosted its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting at the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh on the 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2011. The theme of the meeting was 'working with industry', with the intention of provoking frank discussion and encouraging consideration of the issues arising when academics and medics enter into research partnerships with the pharmaceutical industry.

It was important to provide a balanced combination of speakers from the academic environment and from the pharmaceutical industry as well as hearing impressions from those who had been part of both worlds and the guest list of invited speakers reflected that desire. The meeting was introduced, and chaired, by Professor Stephen Lawrie, the head of the Division of Psychiatry and Director of the network with a brief overview of the structure of the network and our aims and objectives. Updates from Andrew McKechnie, Clinical Research Fellow at the Division of Psychiatry, for a Novartis funded study into Fragile X syndrome and Keith Matthews, Professor of Psychiatry from the University of Dundee, regarding deep brain stimulation, were well received.

Jui-Lee Birse-Archbold, the Grand Challenge Program Manager for Pfizer related her experience of the challenges inherent in trying to bring together researchers from the private sector and from academia, to the satisfaction of both. Alan McNair, Research Manager at the Chief Scientist Office gave the CSO perspective on the role and importance of the Scottish clinical research networks and this was followed by David Christmas' insightful and incisive examination of 'pharmaceutical shadow-science'.

Douglas Turkington, Honorary Professor of Psychosocial Psychiatry at the University of Newcastle gave an entertaining and astute account of an industry funded pragmatic trial of CBT for schizophrenia in community settings while Professor David Healy from the University of Cardiff discussed conflicts of interest in the context of academic involvement in industry funded research. Jayne Bailey, representing the MRC, gave an overview of that organisation's stance on industry collaboration and the presentations were rounded off by Dr Alan Carson's shrewd and amusing insight from the perspective of an Associate Editor of a scientific journal.

The meeting was brought to a close with the presentation of prizes for the best poster to James Currie (University of Aberdeen) and the student prize was awarded to Victoria Gradin (University of Dundee).

The aims of the Annual Scientific Meeting were to stimulate debate about the advantages and difficulties of engaging with the pharmaceutical industry; to present our audience with examples of where those partnerships had worked well and where different priorities had caused conflict and controversy. We also wanted to highlight the government and MRC positions on industry collaboration and we wanted to inform and bring up to date the people with whom we engage with and depend on with our achievements, successes and challenges for the next year.

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