

SRR Presidents Report – Feb 2011

It has been another active year for the Society with Conferences in Sheffield last summer and in Salford last winter.

As you will know the Society is best known for its high standards, particularly, the quality of the research presented, which keeps people coming back and our unique selling point, which is of course that we are the *only multidisciplinary Rehabilitation Research Society*. We hope that the scientific content of the meetings remains relevant and attractive to the members. However as with other groups the Society suffers at times of economic downturn with fewer bums on seats. Widespread public sector cuts in health and social care and university education are starting to have an impact on clinical posts and this makes for uncertainty and a lack of funding for conference attendance. Some have seen reductions in PhD recruitment and although not yet apparent, opportunities for research funding may be reduced. As such this makes us question the viability of future meetings particularly the 2 day summer meeting which is always most affected. Many delegates come for a single day. Whilst the meetings remain economically viable and continue to please those who attend, one questions the effort required of the organisers and the impact on the image of the Society at poorly attended meetings. We have worked hard over recent years at marketing and promotion so it is not for the want of trying. So one of the things we discussed last night at our council meeting was whether the two day summer meeting should be reduced to one day? - we welcome your feedback on this.

In times of change and austerity the Society and the membership need to be resilient. As part of this we would encourage members to become members of research funding panels (such as the current Research for Patient Benefit call) and become integrated into local and national research networks, so that they are well placed to respond to opportunities as they arise and to share intelligence via the SRR network with other members. We can produce member alerts to highlight opportunities or include these in our quarterly newsletter.

Examples of research opportunities arising from networking are the Stroke Research networks recent call for funding to support the formation of 'writing groups', which support bringing together people who can work synergistically to develop bids for larger grants such as the NHR Programme Grants. Along these lines Dr Chris Burton has asked me to flag up a similar opportunity within Wales, where the OPAN network has a call for writing group funding.

Dr Chris Burton has provided a 'Rehabilitation Statement of Purpose'. The document is intended to provide a framework that enables people on the 'fringes' of rehabilitation research (e.g. social sciences and service users) to align their interests with those of the SRR.

Last night we also discussed the future use and relevance of our Jiscmail list, which is currently not working as a members' only facility. A decision was made to open it out to a wider audience and promote it to non members and MSc students and encourage discussion and debate amongst members to a wider audience by posting some items for debate. This will be the last attempt to make this forum work.

We also discussed ways of promoting the Society and its work by targeting certain conferences and meetings with SRR publicity stands. So if you are hosting a meeting and would like information for your delegate pack or have suggestions where to promote the SRR please let us know.

We discussed plans for future meetings and potential symposia topics with some great suggestions on sex and disability and neuro-palliative rehab. If you have any suggestions please note these on your evaluation form. We have an exciting programme lined up for Keele with symposia on studying movement, overcoming barriers to moving in society, limitations to getting around and going it alone – and how people operate independently.

Unfortunately plans for winter 2012 meeting in Glasgow fell through at the last minute but Dr Andrew Bateman, former Council member has stepped in to fill the breach and offered to host a meeting at the Oliver Zangwill Centre in Ely, Cambridgeshire for winter 2012, so we very much look forward to that and will be working with him to develop an exciting programme.

If you would be willing to host a future meeting please make yourself known to us. We can provide full

support in compiling a programme and full administrative support.