

RUNNING through an exciting fabric of high quality scientific and educational presentations was the thread of research governance. It is clear that the time, effort and bureaucracy required to meet the exacting standards are becoming ever greater. It is a matter of time before these outweigh the potential benefits of new planned research. One team had to obtain formal approval from 59 research management and governance organisations to conduct a straightforward postal survey — a process that took 5 months and was still not completely successful. While no researcher doubts the value of research governance, at this conference there was a clear need expressed to streamline the process. This could begin by the agreement between the organisations involved of common standards and approaches, and a widespread commitment to the avoidance of duplication. Otherwise, primary care research, whose growing health was demonstrated in Glasgow, is under serious threat.

Blair Smith

THE sentiments of the internationale could be detected at the 2004 SAPC conference on Clydeside in 2004 as research and teaching staff responded to the call 'arise ye from your slumbers'. The meeting provided further evidence that academic general practice has started to move out of established national boundaries with collaborations like the Brisbane Initiative to encourage research training in different countries recently. There were overseas speakers, representatives from the North American Primary Care group (NAPCRG) and editors from our major journals like the *BJGP*, *Family Practice* and the *Annals of Family Practice*. Two of the best presentations were selected, and funded, to represent general practice in the UK at the combined NAPCRG/WONCA conference in Orlando in October 2004.

When SAPC next convene during July 2005 in Newcastle/Gateshead the reciprocal transatlantic crossing will be made by their best presenters. We may yet have to wait a few years before academic general practice 'unites the human race', but SAPC in Glasgow made an excellent contribution to the process.

Frank Sullivan

AN unusually large number stayed for the last morning, which was enlivened by a series of special sessions, beginning with John Hutton, Minister of State for Health, standing in for John Reid at the last minute and giving a very helpful address on the policy perspective on the future of primary care. Mr Hutton was unusual, not only in staying for questions, but also by responding to challenging questions with the comment that this was a group he needed more contact with. So plans are already afoot for a meeting with the Minister, to discuss research-based inputs to government policy for primary care. Not a bad result, as these things go.

There followed a poster session, fulfilling the organiser's promise that every poster would be subject to peer review and comment. Feedback suggests that this was a popular session, which over-ran in several cases, due to shared interest in research in over a dozen topic areas.

After a fifth parallel session of scientific presentations, the final session of the conference covered many issues in quickfire succession — bottles of Bollinger for the conference team, a quick debrief on the Minister's visit, the award of two bursaries for the best presentations to be given again at the next meeting of NAPCRAG in Orlando, an enticing presentation for next year's ASM in Gateshead and a standing ovation for Roger Jones' contributions to academic primary care.

The College has launched the **Paul Freeling Award (PFA)** for innovative or meritorious work in the field of vocational training in general practice.

The Award, open to course organisers and trainers, is inspired by the work of the late Professor Paul Freeling. Award winners will receive a certificate and £1000, donated by the Professor Freeling's widow, Mrs Shirley Freeling. The Award's presentation will take place annually.

Application for the PFA is by nomination or self-nomination; using the application form available on the RCGP website. All entries must be received by 15 September 2004. Applications for the Award must be made on the application form available on the RCGP website.

For more information on this award and for an application form visit the RCGP website at:

<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/corporate/awards/paulfreeling.asp>