

# Out of Hours

## RCGP Junior International Committee:

a global approach to primary care

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Junior International Committee (JIC) was formed to harness the enthusiasm of early career GPs (Associates in Training [AiTs] and First5® GPs) for international health activities. The aim is to promote a global approach to primary care to better prepare a new generation for delivering general practice in an increasingly multicultural and interconnected world.

The JIC is a subcommittee of the RCGP International Committee, working in collaboration to deliver the RCGP international strategy.<sup>1</sup> The committee is organised around a number of working groups: Education and Training, Research, Beyond Europe, Exchange, and Image. Three key areas of activity are described below.

### INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

The JIC is the UK branch of the Vasco da Gama Movement (VdGM), the WONCA Europe working group for new and future GPs. This enables collaboration on many projects including the Europe-wide reciprocal exchange programme known as Hippokrates. This is a well-established opportunity for early career GPs to experience a 2-week observational placement in one of 27 member countries.<sup>2</sup> Each Hippokrates exchange has a clear learning structure based on the core curriculum statements of WONCA,<sup>3</sup> which themselves form the basis of the RCGP curriculum, allowing participants to reflect on various aspects of primary care from management of healthcare systems to consultation styles.

In 2010 and 2012 the JIC obtained a European Union grant (the Leonardo Lifelong Learning programme) providing bursaries to support UK participants taking part in the exchange. This has resulted in an additional 65 UK doctors benefiting from funded placements in general practice settings across the continent. The success of this endeavour is spreading with more VdGM countries securing funding and learning from the experience of the JIC Exchange team.

A further recent success has been the JIC's exchange programme with Japan, where general practice as a specialty is in its infancy. This relationship has already resulted in the creation of a Japanese First5® network.<sup>4</sup>

The JIC Image team plays an important role in consolidating international networks by enabling communication between JIC members and colleagues in similar organisations under the umbrella of WONCA World.

### EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND RESEARCH

The JIC has been at the forefront of efforts to incorporate global health competencies into UK postgraduate medical training.<sup>5</sup> The Education & Training group is also involved in organising and encouraging participation in WONCA Europe and in VdGM preconferences and workshops.

The JIC Research group aims to promote and support primary care research among early career GPs in the UK and across the world, working in collaboration with the VdGM research group among others. The group also coordinates the UK's nomination for the annual VdGM Junior Researcher Award.

### INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The JIC Beyond Europe group works with national and international organisations in the development of long-term global partnerships to promote and support primary healthcare within healthcare systems.<sup>6</sup> Examples include collaboration with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to endorse and advertise their primary care-focused voluntary projects. The JIC has also contributed to work on the exciting RCGP 60 for 60 project in Sierra Leone working with Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO).<sup>7</sup> Finally the JIC has a partnership with Bwindi Community Hospital, Uganda, providing a pioneering community-focused voluntary project for RCGP members incorporating elements of clinical work, teaching, quality improvement, and research.<sup>8</sup>

### NEXT STEPS ...

The RCGP JIC is entering an exciting new phase, with a number of roles on the committee due to be advertised in the autumn of 2014. To find out more, watch this short video,<sup>9</sup> get in touch by email with Robin, or in person at the First5® Essentials or at the RCGP conference.

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