



---

# Newsletter

Volume 1 • Number 1 • 2004

---

**Message from Dr Alison Bigrigg,  
President of the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care, UK**

Host Society for the ESC Congress in 2004

It is with great delight, I wish to welcome all members of the ESC to Edinburgh, Scotland, UK for the 2004 ESC Congress from 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2004.

Immediately prior to the opening ceremony on 23<sup>rd</sup> June at mid-day, the UK host society the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care will hold it's Annual General Meeting. This will be an open session and all members of the ESC are welcome. We wish to share experience of promoting education and knowledge, standards and training in contraceptive and reproductive health care with delegates from all over Europe.

As President of the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care (FFPRHC), I have been invited by the ESC to describe our organisation. A summary of our present activity is given below, but I am most happy to answer any other queries.

The Workforce in the United Kingdom

75% to 80% of contraception is provided by general practitioners, 20% – 25% from specialists working in the community family planning clinics with a small contribution from hospital based gynaecologists and midwives. All contraceptive services are provided free of charge by the National Health Service. More detailed information about the organisation of the workforce is available from our Manpower Census which can be viewed on our web-site ([www.ffprhc.org.uk](http://www.ffprhc.org.uk)).

Our Membership

Our society currently has approximately 11,000 medical members. Membership is obtained by undertaking approved training courses, practical instruction and assessment to obtain a Diploma of the Faculty of Family Planning (DFFP) or by passing the Membership Examination (MFFP). DFFP training courses last for three days and most candidates undertake at least four additional days of practical instruction within Family Planning clinics before obtaining necessary competencies for award of DFFP. The MFFP Examination can only be undertaken after significant experience of working within contraceptive and reproductive health services. Part I is the multiple choice examination, Part II consists of three separate papers, an objective structured clinical examination, a critical appraisal paper and a short structured essay examination. Candidates are also required to complete a dissertation or two 2500 word case studies.

## Aims and Objectives of the Faculty

The Faculty was founded in 1993 with the following aims and objectives:

- 1) To give academic status to the discipline of Family Planning and Reproductive Health
- 2) To develop and maintain standards within the discipline
- 3) To promote interaction with related disciplines
- 4) To provide information to support education in the speciality
- 5) To advance medical knowledge in the speciality
- 6) To represent those working in the speciality

I now give some examples of our achievements to date.

### Academic Status within the Discipline

In addition to supporting the MFFP and DFFP examinations, we provide Certificates of Competence for IUD insertion, contraceptive implants and instructing (training) in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health. We have recently developed a Special Skills Module to certify competency in vasectomy procedures and the provision of basic and advanced menopause services. In conjunction with the RCOG, we run a specialist registrar training programme of 6 years duration which leads to placement on the European Specialist Register as a Specialist in Sexual and Reproductive Health Care. We also organise a 3 year module training for doctors wishing to work as non-consultants within the speciality. Details of syllabuses and log books of experience for both the 3 and 5 year training programmes are available on the web-site. Training is only allowed in designated centres with approved programme directors.

### Maintain and Develop Standards of Care and Training to Ensure High Quality of Practice is Maintained by All Providers of Contraception

Specialists within the United Kingdom have to provide evidence of competence every 5 years in order to remain on the General Medical Council register which is required in order to practise clinical medicine. We have produced a toolkit to support practitioners undertaking revalidation within the speciality of Family Planning and Reproductive Health. In addition, we have developed service standards for all those providing contraceptive services. These include essential and desirable standards on access, service provision, service leadership, training, chaperoning, guidelines, confidentiality, record keeping, monitoring and evaluation. We are also developing a policy for assisting authorities when an investigation of a doctor's performance is necessary.

### Promote Effective Interactions with Related Healthcare Disciplines

We work with colleagues in general practice, obstetrics and gynaecology, public health, genitourinary medicine and nursing organisations to ensure a broad and united approach to standards and training within our discipline.

### Providing Information to Support Education

Our Society's Journal, the Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care reaches 11,000 readers and professional libraries around the world. It is available in electronic form and listed in Index Medicus. It aims to improve reproductive and sexual health nationally and internationally by disseminating highest quality research information which is relevant to clinical care, service delivery, training and education in the field of contraception and reproductive/sexual health.

We also organise two large national meetings for three to four hundred delegates each year. Local meetings are arranged by our affiliated groups.

#### To Advance Medical Knowledge

Our Clinical Effectiveness Unit is based in Aberdeen University, Scotland. This unit provides an evidence based enquiry service, recommendations for clinical practice and a review of new research/products. In addition in 2003, it published a Consensus document for UK modification of the WHO Selected Practice Recommendations. This was developed in conjunction with the UK Medicines Control Agency and voluntary organisations such as the Family Planning Association (fpa). These publications can be found on the web-site. In addition to this independent unit, we also work with the Government's National Collaborating Centre for Women and Child Health to produce relevant guidelines.

Currently most of our members are within the United Kingdom, but we are keen to extend links with practitioners in Europe and elsewhere in the world. Please feel free to attend our Annual General Meeting or visit our information stand at the Congress in Edinburgh. It would be a pleasure to meet you.

Alison Bigrigg  
President of Faculty of Family Planning & Reproductive Health Care,  
Faculty of Family Planning & Reproductive Health Care,  
27 Sussex Place,  
Regent's Park, LONDON NW1 4RG  
Tel: 0207 724 5524  
Email: [pamela@ffprhc.org.uk](mailto:pamela@ffprhc.org.uk)