

Two Year Plan in support of application for recognition as Clinical Interest Group of Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

The aim of the Physiotherapy Research Society (PRS) is to promote research in physiotherapy and to provide a firm scientific knowledge base from which to enhance the effectiveness of physiotherapy practice and ultimately improve services to patients. This will be achieved by encouraging high quality research relevant to physiotherapy practice and fostering critical awareness throughout the profession. The Society will disseminate the results of such research both within and beyond the profession. PRS was founded in 1992. Since then it has been fulfilling this aim and will continue to do so by the following:

1) Hold bi-annual scientific meetings.

These provide an opportunity to disseminate research findings, network and discuss policy matters relating to physiotherapy research. Our plan is to hold the meetings to cover a wide a geographical areas as possible. In 2003 meetings were held in Edinburgh and Oxford. Future meetings will be in London and Salford and Southampton. The format of these meetings is flexible but there are usually 2-4 keynote speakers to give a 'state of the art view' on relevant topics of the day and/or local expertise. There are free paper sessions where people whose abstracts have been accepted after the peer review process present their research findings. Submissions for the free paper sessions have grown in number and quality over the few years. We have held concurrent sessions for several years to accommodate the number of submissions. However the demand is now such that we are considering moving to a longer meeting over 1 and a half or two days. When appropriate, workshops are also run as part of the meeting to cover practical research issues such as applying for grant funding, writing for publication or successful supervision. Our meeting in Spring 2005, at Southampton, will be held jointly with the Society for Research in Rehabilitation. It meets our criteria to develop links with other research groups and gives an ideal opportunity to show-case physiotherapy research to other HCPs. Further joint meetings with other research/ professional bodies/ academic institutions will normally be supported.

In 2002 the abstract submission and review process was overhauled and updated. We now have a transparent, efficient and effective method of collecting and reviewing abstracts submitted for presentation at PRS. We also offer extensive constructive feedback about the abstracts and, where appropriate, advise on how these could be improved for resubmission. We will continue to monitor this process and refine it where appropriate

The proceedings of PRS Scientific meetings are published in *Physiotherapy*. Correspondence with the editorial team has ensured that this will continue after the 'revamping' of the journal.

2) Develop communication with and between members.

The scientific meetings are the main opportunity for communication, but in addition, 2003 saw the launch of the PRS website (www.prs-uk.org). This contains all the information about PRS, the meetings, submitting abstracts etc. In the next two years we will continue to monitor, update and develop this website.

We have also developed a new category of PRS membership, which allows clinical or

academic departments to take up membership. This allows the department to send up to two people to attend a PRS scientific meeting for the full members' rate. It was developed to encourage membership of PRS, to enable research active/supportive departments to become involved with PRS and to access our information and communication networks.

To facilitate timely communication we are developing a database of email contacts for members, leaders of post-graduate courses and research leaders/directors in institutions which are active in physiotherapy research. Over the next two years we will continue to update this database and explore other ways of improving communication.

3) Support researchers

PRS has launched two modest funding streams to support physiotherapy researchers. The Presentation Bursary scheme provides support for people whose abstracts have been accepted to present at PRS and covers the costs of attending the scientific meeting to present. The bursary is open to any member of PRS who is unable to obtain support to attend PRS from other means. The recipients are most usually novice researchers presenting for the first time.

In 2003 we launched the Research Award scheme. This is open to all members of PRS and we will grant up to £500 to support research. It is aimed primarily at pump priming research projects but support to attend post-registration courses and attend conferences will also be considered. In 2003/4 two Awards were made. In the next two years we will continue to promote and publicise the Presentation Bursary and Research Awards and review their criteria as appropriate.