The inaugural year of the RCGP Junior International Committee has got off to a flying start.

The formation of JIC has galvanised UK GP trainees and junior GPs to take a greater interest in international primary care, and explore the world of general practice beyond our borders.

This year over thirty junior UK delegates attended the 15th WONCA Europe Conference in Basel, Switzerland, a number of whom had successfully secured funding from their training deanery or RCGP Faculty. Many delegates were also able to attend the Vasco da Gama (VdGM) preconference held two days before the main event.

The unmistakable sound of the Alphorn welcomed delegates to this year's conference, the theme of which was the Fascination of Complexity. An endless array of workshops, seminars, lectures and symposia were on offer, with a VdGM stream running throughout the four days.

Leading figures in primary care from the UK and across Europe held thought provoking workshops on issues such as humanities in the workshops however, perhaps the greatest learning opportunity was the chance to discuss, debate and share experiences of family medicine with counterparts abroad. JIC hopes to continue this year’s success with an even greater number of delegates at next year’s WONCA conferences. See you there!

Cancun:
WONCA World May 2010
www.wonca2010cancun.com

Malaga:
WONCA Europe Oct 2010
www.woncaeurope2010.org
A World of Difference…..

We asked 3 Spanish doctors to talk about their experience of an exchange in the UK. The full interviews can be found on www.jintc.org, here is a snapshot

QUIONIA VILLAR
Sant Jaume de Llierca

I spent five weeks in total at the Henfield Medical Centre and the Lime Tree Surgery in North Worthing in June and July 2009. The biggest difference I found was all surgeries in the UK run as partner businesses while in Spain only ten percent run like that, the rest are run by big health corporations.

Also, in the UK there are more health professionals in primary care, and birth control is free unlike Spain where only emergency contraception is free.

The most important thing I learnt was to give the patient more information and help them to make decisions; also the importance of sexual history taking – these simple but important things.

This exchange was quite easy for me to organize through VdGM and I would definitely recommend it to others. It is pretty interesting to see how other health systems are run abroad, and we can always share different ways of working and learn new ones from the others!

I think it is a good idea to enable trainees to practise abroad, and to have insurance which covers us to practise throughout Europe, perhaps even for when we are qualified!

SERGI ORITZ
Sabadell

I spent one month based in both Henfield and Bournemouth in March 2009. It took me over a year to organise as I did not get any help from my Deanery, and initially I did not know where to start looking! I finally found my contacts through the WONCA website and organised it through them.

I found the biggest difference compared to Spain was the organisation of General Practice in the UK, e.g. the control of most of chronic disease is done by nurses and supervised by GPs, making it a profitable working team.

Two of my most memorable days in the UK were spent at a football match in Bournemouth, and a typical pub lunch and beer after a very muddy 12km bike ride in Henfield!

I would recommend this to others without a doubt as I think it should be possible for every GP to have this experience.

I think it could be very positive if international family medicine organizations had more contact with Deaneries showing them the positive things about exchanges, and encouraging them to participate more in international activities.
CRISTINA RUIZ

*Lleida*

My exchange in London has been an opportunity to immerse myself in several areas of the NHS to see how it is organized.

One thing that really caught my attention is the different relationship that exists in the UK between the doctor and the patient compared to Spain.

Other differences include: Several staff members in this system that I had never seen before, such as the manager who looks after the administration and the economy of the health care centre. The auxiliary nurses’ role is very different here with more responsibility, the unique out of hours service and use of telephone consultations.

The final major difference is the specialist nurses who are very interesting figures in this health system. They have profound knowledge of specific areas, and are in charge of doing the follow-up of the patients with those pathologies which is not the practice in Europe.

I think that having an exchange after doing our Family Practice Residence is a very profitable and interesting experience.

I have been able to see a different and very efficient way of organization of a Health system which is beneficial for the patients. I am happy to have had this great opportunity that has been offered to me by VdGM and I recommend it to be done by all doctors.

---

**Exchange**

The current remit for the exchange committee is to develop hosting of foreign doctors and facilitate placements within Europe for UK trainees & junior GPs. This work is done under the ‘*Hippokrates programme in the UK*’ title which links us to the well-established European *Vasco da Gama Movement*.

Our priority has been to promote UK hosting (1-2 week observerships), due to the higher demand for this activity, see box below.

The success of hosting so far, has been due to the efforts of the five practices already established prior to JIC’s inception.

We are very appreciative of their involvement; without their input, we have little scope to host.

Sadly hosting is in a vulnerable position due to its dependence on the small number of practices. The challenge therefore is to encourage more practices to get excited about international educational activity.

If you would like to know more about hosting or going on an observership overseas please send me an email.

*Dr Simon Davis*  
*Exchange Lead JIC*

If you would like to know more about hosting or going on an observership overseas please send me an email.

*Dr Simon Davis*  
*Exchange Lead JIC*

jrcgp-international-committee-exchange-committee@googlegroups.com

---

- Hosting visits accomplished = 12
- Outstanding requests to visit = 14
- Most active host practice = Henfield Medical Centre (9 visits)
A Penny for your thoughts……

Through this difficult economic climate, gaining financial backing for a fledgling organisation was inevitably going to be a challenge.

Despite this however, approximately half of the UK training Deaneries and RCGP Faculties this year provided funding to enable junior GPs from around the UK to attend the educational WONCA Europe conference.

Also with support from the AiT committee we have enabled 19 European GP trainees to take part in the first international exchange during the RCGP annual conference. This will enable there to be an international exchange of knowledge and experience at our own national conference!

The Image team has also been working extremely hard in establishing a dedicated website which bridges the Vasco da Gama Movement and the RCGP.

We aim to continue to raise awareness of the opportunities the JIC offers, as well as continue to establish international links for junior UK GPs.

To build upon these opportunities available to us, we need your continued support and enthusiasm. If you have any ideas on fundraising or would like to take a more active role, please contact us.

Dr Sandeep Geeranavar
Treasurer JIC

The Future for JIC

The JIC’s Core objective is to facilitate the involvement of GP trainees and GPs within five years of CCT in international educational activities related to primary care.

Six months on from the inaugural meeting, we find that a huge amount of progress has been made with the establishment, exchange and research aspects of the JIC. We recognise the simultaneous need for consolidation of our existing foundations together with further exploration of our potential as an international committee. Thus we are working on several aspects of development to facilitate the JIC’s core objective.

Several avenues to raise awareness of JIC and so increase participation have been sought, with submission of JIC-related articles by committee members to national medical journals such as the BJGP, InnovAiT, RCGP news, London journal of General Practice and the International Journal of Clinical Skills.

With JIC contacts we look to the long-term aim of creating multiple bilateral exchanges with countries outside Europe such as Thailand and Korea.

We are also looking into working with the existing RCGP International Development Programme in order to facilitate further links with junior GPs across the world.

Communication with NGOs such as Medecins Sans Frontieries, Alma Mata and the International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations in the UK are currently underway.

We hope that that the JIC’s exciting future will inspire you to participate in international activities and be a part of this exciting initiative.

Dr Ha-Neul Seo
Strategic Planning Lead
JIC

www.jintc.org
An aide-mémoire from WONCA Europe

Dates for your Diary

- Deadline for submission of abstracts for WONCA World is 30th November 2009
- The JIC London Christmas Social is on Saturday 12th December, please join us from 4pm for ice skating, dinner and drinks, further details to follow via the Google Group. Regional events to be organised locally.
- Early bird discount for WONCA World 2010 registration until 30th December 2009.