



NI Centre for
**Pharmacy Learning
& Development**

/Newsletter/April 2009/

The year in overview

Each year NICPLD is commissioned by DHSSPS to provide professional development opportunities to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians practising in Northern Ireland. Our core activities have traditionally centred on live and distance learning programmes and these continue to be extensively used by pharmacists as part of their professional development.

Over the years we have added to this provision with the independent prescribing course, the clinical postgraduate course for hospital pharmacists and CPD grants, which funds pharmacists to participate in other specialised courses and degrees that NICPLD does not provide.

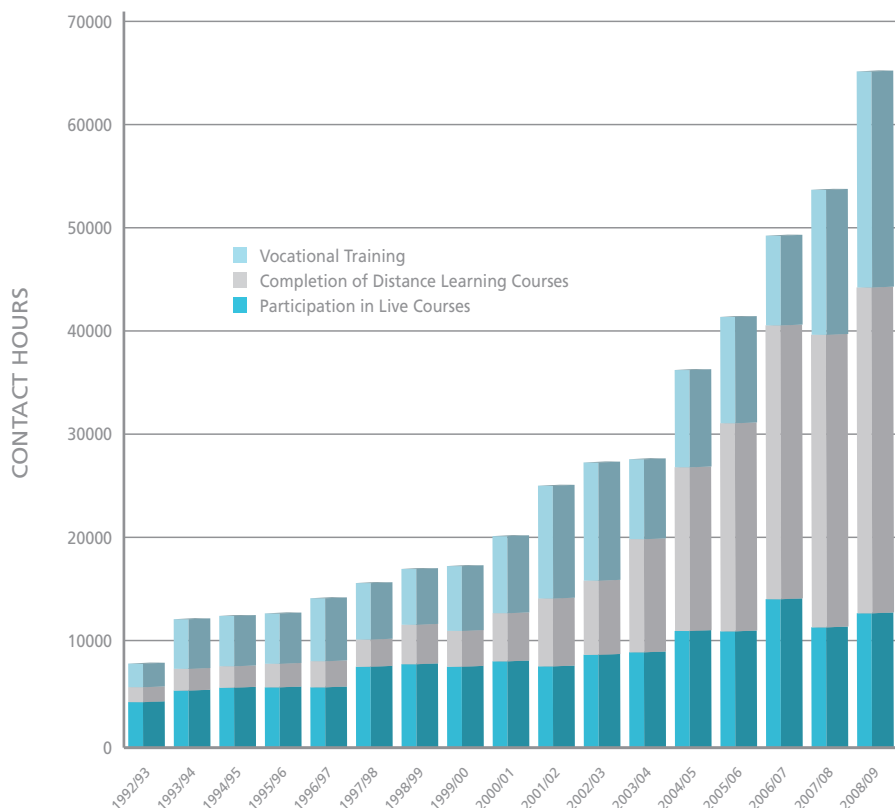
This year we have added a major new initiative – vocational training (VT) for newly qualified hospital pharmacists. Hospital pharmacy managers have been very enthusiastic about the new programme and course participants have found that it gives them a comprehensive, competence-based training in all aspects of hospital pharmacy. So successful has the VT programme been that we are planning a similar development for advanced practitioners and will explore how these programmes could translate to the community and primary care sectors.

Taking all of these learning formats together, in 2008/09 NICPLD provided 1,051 hours of learning opportunity to pharmacists in Northern Ireland.



Taking these learning formats as a whole, 1,580 individual pharmacists participated on 8,125 occasions in our programmes in 2008/09. This equated to 64,478 contact hours and represents a 20% increase in contact hours in comparison to last year. Part of this increase (7%) was attributed to the successful introduction of the vocational training programme for hospital pharmacists in September 2008. But, in general, pharmacists are participating in NICPLD courses more than ever before.

Programme uptake in 2008/09 in comparison to previous years



Maintaining and enhancing quality is an important consideration in educational delivery. Thus, the feedback you give us by way of the yellow evaluation forms is valuable in informing us how we can improve our service. Each year DHSSPS sets quality targets that our programmes should meet or exceed. These are highlighted in the following table. It is evident from the table that the actual score for our courses were exceeded in all of the categories.

While we appreciate you taking the time to complete the course evaluation forms, we welcome your feedback and suggestions at anytime. Almost 500 pharmacists responded to the recent online needs assessment and we have used the data from this questionnaire to help us develop our programmes for 2009/10. In the next newsletter we will outline the results of the needs assessment questionnaire in more detail.

Overall programme performance against targets

Element	Criteria	Standard (%)	Actual (%)
Application process	Very good or good	85	97
Objectives	Both mostly or completely	95	98
Relevance	Both mostly or completely	85	93
Quality of content	Very good or good	90	96
Quality of presentation	Very good or good	90	96
Intellectual stimulus	Both straightforward/challenging	95	98
Overall satisfaction	7 or more	90	92
Assessment of venue	7 or more	85	92

CPD Grants

NICPLD facilitates other opportunities for CPD by contributing towards fees (up to 50%) to enable pharmacists to participate in courses, workshops or conferences related to their professional development. Funding is not limited to formal university courses – applications are encouraged for attendance at short courses or conferences related to your practice. Funding covers course/conference fees, but does not cover travel and subsistence.

Application forms for CPD grants can be requested from NICPLD or downloaded as word documents from the NICPLD website. The review committee will next meet on 10 June 2009 and applications for funding should be received by the Centre no later than one week before this date.

www.nicpld.org

Independent Prescribing

Making the move to primary care

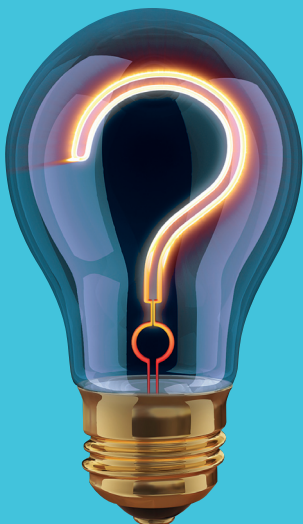
At the beginning of 2009 the 100th pharmacist qualified as an independent prescriber in Northern Ireland and in April a further 25 pharmacists began their training to become prescribers. Ruth Morrissey is one of those 25 and this is how she began working with GPs and how she hopes to practice when qualified.

"Having just had my first child, I was looking for a new role and challenge within Pharmacy. A friend had just started working in GP practices and suggested I contacted the prescribing advisers based at the EHSSB to see if any work was available locally. By good fortune, the EHSSB was funding GP practices to employ practice pharmacists; demand for suitably qualified pharmacists was high and I soon found myself actually turning work away! I presently work for four different practices with list sizes ranging from two to 12 thousand patients. Responsibilities vary from practice-to practice, but can include analysing COMPASS reports, implementing cost-effective prescribing policies, clinical audit, identifying clinically stable patients suitable for participation in the repeat dispensing service, writing practice formularies and staff training. It is a fulfilling and rewarding role allowing pharmacists to integrate into the multidisciplinary team within primary care. Generally pharmacists need to have at least three years post-registration relevant clinical experience. GPs can still obtain 80% funding for practice pharmacists posts, with the number of sessions allowed for being based on list size."

"Having worked in general practice I felt that it would be useful to be able to extend my role by prescribing for the practice. I discussed this with the partners who were very supportive and were happy to mentor me on the prescribing course. When I have completed the course I intend to prescribe for patients with hypertension in the four practices."

Towards the end of this year we will begin to recruit for the next intake of prescribing trainees. While this seems a long way off, there are some things you need to do in advance of the course starting. The most important of these is to talk to your local GPs who would agree to be your mentor and to use their practice for the in-practice component of the course.

To help you make an informed decision as to whether prescribing is for you we will be running evening workshops in the last quarter of 2009 on how to begin working with GPs in primary care and how you can use your prescribing skills. Full details of these workshops will be in the August course brochure.



Distance learning MCQs

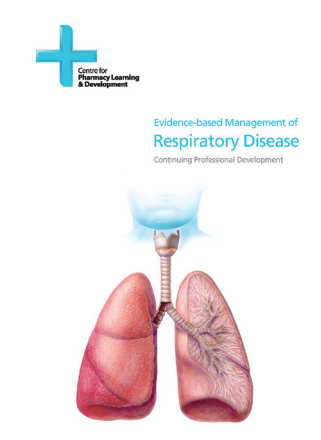
When a distance learning course becomes out-of-date it is replaced with a new version. Therefore, from 1 January 2009 when a course has been out-of-date for 6 months we will remove its MCQs from our database. This means that you will no longer be able to submit your answers to an out-of-date course for marking.

As the majority of pharmacists and technicians have now registered for

the NICPLD website and over 80% of people complete their MCQs online, we would like to move away from paper-based submissions of MCQ answers to online submission only. This would enable us to keep the questions, answers and feedback up-to-date. You will be able to print out the questions from www.nicpld.org. We anticipate introducing this change from September 2009.

Distance learning

New courses for 2009



Evidence-based management of respiratory disease

(16 hours of learning)

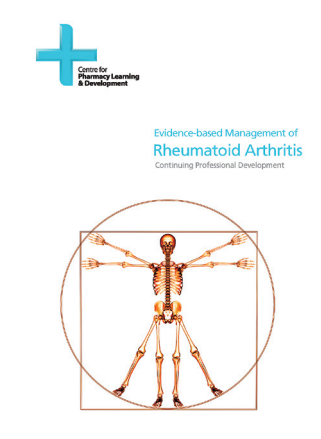
Aim

To enable healthcare professionals to provide effective care for patients suffering from asthma and COPD.

Intended learning outcomes

Having completed this course you should be able to:

- identify risk factors associated with developing asthma and COPD
- review the underlying pathophysiology of asthma and COPD
- effectively monitor patients with respiratory diseases
- describe best practice in managing patients with asthma and COPD
- demonstrate the correct use of inhaler devices
- provide guidance on the appropriate use of nebuliser and oxygen therapy in the management of asthma and COPD.



Evidence-based management of rheumatoid arthritis

(10 hours of learning)

Aim

To examine the management of rheumatoid arthritis in adults, emphasising a cost-effective and rational approach to therapy, with a view to improving the use of prescription and non-prescription medication to ensure satisfactory outcomes.

Intended learning outcomes

Having completed this course you should be able to:

- describe the incidence, aetiology and pathophysiology of rheumatoid arthritis
- outline the signs and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis and describe the guidelines and investigations used to aid diagnosis
- discuss the current drug therapy available to treat this condition and indicate the principles of rational drug choice in individual patients
- identify the advice and information needs of patients that would enable them to manage their condition and medications more effectively.

<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence-based Management of Respiratory Disease	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence-based Management of Rheumatoid Arthritis
Name	
Address	
Postcode	Contact Telephone No.

Please tick Distance Learning course(s) you are interested in and return applications to: FREEPOST NICPLD or fax to 028 9097 2368