Mr Martin Ward on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Division successfully joined the Mental Health Intensive Programme (IP) (MENTHE) funded by the European Union. This is a three-year project coordinated by the University of Applied Sciences, Tampere, Finland with the participation of the following universities: Karlstads University, Sweden; Dublin City University, Ireland; Hedmark University College, Norway; Kingston University Higher Education Corporation, England; University of Malta, Malta and the Catholic University College, Bruges, Belgium. The aim of this project is to enable students from the participating countries to share educational and clinical developments within chosen themes.

April – June

Joseph Aquilus, from the Communication Therapy Division, attended the 8th World Congress for People who Stutter in Croatia in May 2007 whilst Daniela Gatt participated in the 6th International Symposium on Bilingualism held at the University of Hamburg, Germany.

Anna McElhatton, from the Environmental Health Division, attended the CIHEAM, Zaragosa, Spain in June on the Quality and Safety of Fish. A five day residential course organised by CIHEAM in collaboration with IMAZ and FAO.

In April, Professor Steven J. Ersser, came to Malta. During his visit he delivered two lectures entitled: ‘What is in the black box? Past and future perspectives on nursing as a therapeutic activity’ and ‘Undertaking a Cochrane Systematic Review: an illustration of nursing involvement’. Dr Ersser also delivered a lecture to the M.Sc. students and had a discussion with the nursing and midwifery staff currently following Doctoral Studies. Professor Ersser is RN, Ph.D. (Lond.), B.Sc. (Hons), CertEd and trained as a registered general at Guy’s Hospital London and then took joint clinical/academic posts in Oxford in medical, elderly care and dermatology, including the Oxford Nursing Development Unit, the National Institute for Nursing and the Department of Dermatology. Professor Ersser has held honorary clinical appointments in at the Southampton Dermatology Department and Southampton Primary Care Trust, having recently run a nurse-led chronic illness management clinical for those living with psoriasis.

Ms Carmen Camilleri and Mr Martin Camilleri took part in the Erasmus Teaching Mobility Programme at the Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen in Belgium. Lectures were delivered on the following topics: Activities of Daily Living, Communication in Nursing, Nurse’s Role and Concept of Care to Nursing Students.

Mr Noel Abela, a part-timer with the Nursing and Midwifery Division, delivered a speech at the Infectious & Endemic Diseases Scientific Conference held in Tripoli, Libya in May 2007.

Mr Paul Pace presented a paper on ‘Needle Stick Injuries’ at the International Nurses Conference (ICN) held in Yokohama, Japan whilst Dr Donia Baldachhino participated in the international Nursing Doctoral Education in Nursing (INDEN) workshop held in Tokyo, Japan.

Mr Martin Camilleri attended the 30th Annual Canadian Orthopaedic Nurses’ Association ‘Pan Pacific Conference on the Orthopaedic Patient in Victoria, Canada.

Michelle Camilleri, Grace A. Jaccarini, Maria Navarro and Roberta Sammut attended the International RCN Research Conference organized by the Royal College of Nurses, London, UK.

The role of biomedical physics-engineering in the development of medical device education for the healthcare professions

Dr Carmel J. Caruana

Introduction

Biomedical physics-engineering involves the development of medical devices and their effective, safe and efficient application in the clinical milieu. Modern healthcare relies heavily on the twin pillars of pharmaceutical and medical device technology. Unfortunately, whilst pharmaceutical education has been given a lot of attention in healthcare professional curricular development, medical device education has been sorely lacking. Meanwhile, the array, variety and complexity of medical devices have been increasing rapidly with the swift advances in technology. On the other hand, as device education has not kept pace so have underutilization of devices and the number of instances of improper and unsafe use.

Legal definition of a ‘medical device’

The EU medical device directives define a medical device as “any instrument, apparatus, appliance, material or other article, whether used alone or in combination, including the software necessary for its proper application intended by the manufacturer to be used for human beings for the purpose of:

• diagnosis, prevention, monitoring, treatment or alleviation of disease,
• diagnosis, monitoring, treatment, alleviation of or compensation for an injury or handicap,
• investigation, replacement or modification of the anatomy or of a physiological process,
• control of conception,
and which does not achieve its principal intended action in or on the human body by pharmacological, immunological or metabolic means, but which may be assisted in its function by such means” (EC, 1993).

This definition is very broad and the list of medical devices ranges from simple tongue depressors and thermometers, to stethoscopes, hepatitis test kits, contact lenses, breathalyzers, heart valves and pacemakers, physiological monitoring devices, x-ray imaging machines and the complex intricacies of MRI scanners and radiotherapy accelerators.

The role of biomedical physics-engineering in the development of medical devices - a historical perspective

The importance of the contribution of physics-engineering to healthcare has a long history. As long ago as 1856, Fick edited a book called ‘Medizinische Physik’ in 1891. However the influence of physics in medicine registered a quantum leap after the discovery of x-rays by Roentgen (1895) and radioactivity by Becquerel (1896). Stieve (1991) reports that the first two x-ray laboratories were established in Berlin in 1896, one at the Institute of Orthopedics and Pneumotherapy of a certain
Dr Max Immelmann - only one year after the discovery of x-rays. Immelmann also promoted the ‘Roentgenvereinigung’ consisting of 14 medical doctors, physicists and engineers. The first chairperson of this first ‘Roentgen society’ was Walter Wolf, a physicist (Stieve, 1991, citing Goerke, 1980). The first radiological society in England was formed in 1897 - that is only 2 years after the discovery of x-rays, and the first president was Silvanus Thomson, a professor of physics. The developments in the first ten years were mostly in radiodiagnosis. The involvement of physicists in radiotherapy started in 1910 (Stieve, 1991). Stieve citing Cook (1972) states that the first full time physicist in radiotherapy was employed in 1912 in the radiotherapy department of a hospital in Munich. From then onwards, the involvement of physicists-engineers in medicine increased rapidly. The first society of medical physicists (the Hospital Physicists’ Association, UK) was set up in 1943. The first comprehensive medical physics text was the three volume encyclopedia ‘Medical Physics’ by Glasser (1944 -1960) who listed 23 domains of medicine which required close collaboration between physicists-engineers and medical specialists. Laufman (2002) who has reviewed the role of engineering in medical progress cites in detail the milestone contributions of Roentgen in radiology, Bovie in electrosurgery and Greatbatch in implantable cardiac pacemakers. Today medical physics and engineering play a part in all areas of medicine. Established areas are continuously being developed and new areas emerging (Sharp & Perkins, 2006). The future holds devices for biomolecular, cell, tissue and organ engineering, optical imaging, nano-instrumentation and lab-on-a-chip systems for laboratory and home diagnostics (Griffith & Grodzinsky, 2001). Indeed medical physics and engineering have come a long way since those early days of radiodiagnosis and radiotherapy! The advice of a biomedical physics-engineer is today considered essential in ensuring effectiveness, safety and efficiency in the adoption of new medical devices (Bergmann, 2003), and regulatory bodies are increasingly making the presence of a biomedical physics-engineer mandatory in various areas of healthcare. For example, EC Directive 97/43/Euratom regarding the use of ionizing radiation in healthcare states that: 

"In radiotherapeutic practices, a medical physics expert shall be closely involved. In standardized therapeutical nuclear medicine practices and in diagnostic nuclear medicine practices, a medical physics expert shall be available. For other radiological practices, a medical physics expert shall be involved, as appropriate, for consultation on optimization including patient dosimetry and quality assurance including quality control, and also to give advice on matters relating to radiation protection concerning medical exposure, as required."

Scales (1965) emphasized the importance of collaboration between the disciplines of biology, medicine, physics and engineering, whilst Adelstein (2001) in describing the development of radiiodine studies of the thyroid makes the remark that “the cooperation between physicists and physicians that made their accomplishments possible stands as a model example for interdisciplinary collaboration”.

The role of biomedical physics-engineering academics in the development of medical device education for healthcare professionals

Although there have been many instances of interdisciplinary collaboration between biomedical physics-engineering practitioners on one side and healthcare professionals on the other in the clinical and research environments, and although most biomedical physics-engineering...
European institutions with whom we do not have any bilateral agreements. All wanted to carry out nursing clinical placements in Malta. These students paid the standard University of Malta International fees as set by the International Office.

Three diploma students carried out Elective placements at the Queen’s Medical Centre in Nottingham during the month of July, One B.Sc. Nursing student carried out a placement at the School of Medicine in New York between June and July, while another B.Sc. Midwifery student carried placement at the University of Herfordshire in July.

Five students were successful and completed the diploma course in Radiography and graduated in November 2006.

The degree course in Health Science Radiography (October 2005) was offered and fourteen students registered for the course. Another eleven students registered to join the diploma to degree course after they successfully completed the diploma course.
Fasce et al. (2001) report an interesting attempt at introducing problem-based-learning and team-teaching in the physics teaching of medical students. First year medical students were separated into two groups, one group being taught in the traditional manner and the second group using problem-based-methods by a team of physicists, a biochemist and three medical doctors.

The European Federation of Medical Physics has published a syllabus for medical undergraduates. This syllabus, confined in scope to radiation protection issues only (Dendy, 2005), was the response of the federation to a call by the European Commission that "Member states shall encourage the introduction of a course on radiation protection in the basic curriculum of medical and dental schools" (EC Directive, 97/43/Euratom, Article 7).

Of particular significance is an appeal by Mornstein (2005) for biomedical physics-engineering educators to include many more lectures on medical devices apart from established topics like molecular biophysics, biophysics of perception, and microscopy in their curricula for medical students. The author particularly is of the opinion that principles of biosignal instrumentation and processing should be considered as fundamental.

At the moment there is a biomedical physics-engineering component in medical student curricula in practically all European countries (the only exceptions being the UK and Malta).

**Biomedical physics-engineering curricula in radiography programmes**

Physics has been included in the curriculum for radiographers since the beginning of formal radiography education. Snelling (1963) speaks of "an estimation of the necessity for physics in the training of the radiographer". This seems to have led to a symposium on the subject (Franklyn, 1964) and finally a basic syllabus (Mussell, 1965). The College of Radiographers, United Kingdom (2003) includes sections on 'physical sciences' and 'technology' in its curriculum framework for radiography. However given the of necessity broad nature of the document further specification is required to produce learning outcome competence statements that are directly usable in the educational environment. Most schools of Radiography publish a locally developed physics syllabus under such diverse names as 'radiation physics', 'principles of radiation science', 'imaging equipment', 'imaging science and instrumentation', 'radiation protection' and others (Price, High, & Miller, 1997) but there is no evidence of a systematic and studied approach. At the moment there is a strong biomedical physics-engineering component in radiography curricula in all European countries.

**Biomedical physics-engineering teaching in radiation therapist programmes**

Radiotherapy is an area in which physicists and other healthcare professions have worked together in a concerted and systematic manner and on a European scale to produce curricula and educational of Biomedical Sciences (IBMS), UK. The panel included Professor David Holmes, Ms Alison Geddis and Mr. Alan Wainwright. Professor Alfred Vella acted as Chairman. During the visit, the IBMS panel met with Professor Angela Xureb and Dr Joseph A. Borg, the MLS Board of Studies, the MLS lecturing staff and students. A tour of the Hospital Pathology laboratories, the IHC Teaching Laboratory and Library was conducted. The visit had a positive outcome with accreditation being granted for another five years.

Ms Michelle Camilleri, from the Nursing/Midwifery Division, presented a paper on ‘Becoming a nurse: developing professional and personal identities’ at 4th International Researching work and Learning Conference organized by the University of Technology Sydney, Australia in December 2005.

The academic year 2005 – 2006 was a busy and dynamic one for international student and teacher exchanges within the nursing and midwifery division. The international team increased in number helping with the distribution of responsibility for foreign students. There were more outgoing students than incoming in Erasmus and Elective student placements. Five lecturers utilised Teacher Mobility. A total of nine Erasmus bilateral agreements were renewed with current partner institutions. Four new agreements were signed during the year.

Three nursing/midwifery lecturers joined the international team this academic year, thus reducing slightly the workload on the other members.

The current bilateral agreements with the Nursing and Midwifery Division include four midwife and twenty-six nurse student placements in the listed institutions. One bilateral agreement at postgraduate level was signed with Glamorgan University Wales. Teacher mobility and the exchange of 2 students each way was negotiated.

During Academic year 2005 – 2006 the Division received fifteen nursing students and four midwifery students through the Erasmus exchange programmes. This year there was a good response to the Erasmus applications. A total of forty-one students applied. All except two students (who had previously gone on an Erasmus exchange as diploma students) were eligible. Eleven midwifery students applied this year, however there were only 4 midwifery places available. Twenty two nursing students and four midwifery students participated in the Erasmus exchange programme.

Several academic staff from overseas visited the Nursing and Midwifery Division at IHC through Erasmus & Leonardo programmes. These include Mrs Melanie Stephens who made her first visit on behalf of the University of Salford, England through Leonardo funding in May 2006 and Dr Joe Cortis – Senior Lecturer, University of Leeds who contributed to the Masters Degree programme teaching about transcultural nursing through Erasmus funding.

In view of renewing bilateral agreements, it is very important that lecturing staff visit as many partner institutions as possible. Relying on student evaluation alone is not adequate. Staff will be given a checklist form with specific questions regarding services and facilities, level of academic courses and so on, to complete, together with any other documentation so as to be able to evaluate the partner institutions.

Mrs Grace Jaccarini and Ms Vicky Sultana went on a teacher mobility programme to the Universita degli Studi di Verona, Italy in May whilst Ms Dorianne Cologe and Ms Charmaine Attard went on a teacher mobility programme to Savonia Polytechnic, Kuopio, Finland, in April visiting Trento and Verona. Ms Angela Formosa and Ms Therese Bugeja went to the Escola de Enfermagem D. Ana Guedes, Porto, Portugal, in May.

Requests were made from various nursing, midwifery and medical students from other
Two visiting lecturers were invited by the Division to lecture on the pre-registration courses.

Mr Willi A. Kalender, Institute of Medical Physics, Germany; Mr Jaromir Plasek, Charles University, Prague. The Division commenced CPD courses for qualified radiographers. These were: The administration of Prescribed Medicinals by Radiographers and Digital Imaging.

October – December

As part of the Communication Therapy Division Staff exchange there were two outgoing placements at Lessius Hogeschool, Belgium and Fontys Hogeschool, Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

During the month of October 2006, Helen Grech joined Barbara Dodd at the School of Clinical Speech and Language Studies (SCSLS) at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. During her stay at the SCSLS Helen Grech, under the guidance of Barbara Dodd, set up the data base to carry out the analysis of the Maltese data. She also inputted samples of the data and discussed criteria for resolving emerging difficulties with Professor Dodd and staff from the SCSLS.

Professor Barbara Dodd returned to Malta in November 2006 to continue with assisting in the initial analysis of the data collected related to the standardization of the assessments for use with bilingual Maltese children.

Ms Daniela Gatt completed a fifteen day study visit at the University of Zagreb, Croatia in November 2006. This Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) was related to her ongoing doctoral research project and was funded through the Cost Action Project in which the Communication Therapy is a partner. Dr Helen Grech is Malta’s Governmental representative in the management committee of this ongoing Cost Action A33 project related to language acquisition and disorders.

In October, Dr Grech participated in the Annual Board meeting of the Executive Board of the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics, as General Secretary. This was held in Groningen, The Netherlands.

During the month of October, Mr Mario Zarb, Subject Coordinator of Dental Technology participated in the Annual Dental Conference.

In November, Claire Sillato Coppesrone, from the Environmental Health Division, was invited to join the Thematic Network in Dietetics as well as to join The British Nutrition Society’s Pilot Scheme Questionnaire. She was also guest editor for Nutrition special edition of the journal for the Malta College of Pharmacy Practice.

ForSociety ERA-NET Future Dialogue on Food Safety and Biotechnology and Healthy Nutrition “Factors and Actors” Berlin, held in Germany, was attended by Ann McElhatton in November.

A CPD programme with the Medical Laboratory Science Division, on “The Laboratory Science of Immunological Disorders” was held in November. The foreign guest speaker was Dr Peter Charles from the Rheumatology Division at Charing Cross Hospital, UK. Local speakers included Professor Carmel Mallia and Dr. Franco Camilleri Vassallo. This programme was held in collaboration with the Pathology Department, St Luke’s Hospital, and the Malta College of Pathologists.

The MLS Division had a re-accreditation visit in December by a panel from the Institute of Health Care Biennial Report 2006/2007

Materials. An extensive curriculum development programme has been carried out as part of the project ESQUIRE (Education, Science and Quality Assurance for Radiotherapy) which is run under the auspices of the European Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ESTRO) and financed by the EC (Europe Against Cancer initiative). Important outcomes of the project included endorsed guidelines for European core curricula for all three professions within radiation therapy i.e., medical physicists, radiotherapists and radiation therapists (Heeren, 2005). The project led to a European core curriculum for radiation therapists which included a physics component (Coffey, Vandervelde, Van der Heide, Adams, Sundquist & Ramalho, 1997). A revised version has an improved biomedical physics-engineering component under the headings of ‘physics’ and ‘equipment’ (Coffey, Degerfalt, Osztavics, Van Hedeld, & Vandervelde, 2004). A weakness of the curricula is that they are not outcome competence based (as required by the Bologna process) but simply present a list of topics to be covered. At the moment there is a very strong biomedical physics-engineering component in radiation therapist curricula in all European countries.

Biomedical physics-engineering curricula in the postgraduate specializations of radiology and radiotherapy

In 1989, The Committee on Training of Radiologists of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine, published the results of a survey conducted among recently certified radiologists regarding their perceptions of radiological physics training and the importance of the various physics topics included in the radiological physics curricula at the time. The most important results of the survey for this study were the following:

(a) 72% of the respondents had a negative opinion of physics as presented in their programs at the time, however, the same percentage continued to attend physics training even after graduating and notwithstanding the fact that they were not obliged to do so for certification reasons! This clearly indicated that “radiologists actually do consider physics to be a worthwhile endeavor”.

(b) The respondents indicated that they would have liked to have “an emphasis on subjects that are directly relevant to everyday practice” as they felt that “although they acknowledged the need for an understanding of basic physics principles, they clearly perceived that theory had been overemphasized”. The respondents wanted a greater emphasis on those topics relevant to the production of quality images and means of reducing radiation doses to patients.

The results of the survey triggered a discussion that has gone on unabated in some form or another since then. Saba & Poller (1999), argued that it is indeed the superior knowledge that radiologists have of physics that gives radiologists an edge over other clinicians who attempt to read medical images, as medical images are “a combination of both anatomical and physical information” and that the “anatomic and physical information form an inseparable unit”. Moreover:

“It is the job of the radiologist to combine his knowledge of anatomy, disease, and image production in formulating an interpretation. If one of these elements is missing, the interpretation is at best incomplete, if not incorrect. This is what
happens when a clinician who has a thorough knowledge of the specific anatomy and disease process attempts to interpret radiologic images without an understanding of image production”.

Saba & Poller then go on to give several convincing examples of the misdiagnoses that can occur through an inadequate knowledge of imaging physics. Balter (1992) echoes similar sentiments in saying that “radiologists may be able to use their equipment in a safer and more effective manner than would be possible without such knowledge”.

Frey (Frey, Dixon, & Hendee, 2002) in a point-counterpoint discussion argued that owing to the pressures on radiologists’ learning time only physics knowledge that is derived from the clinical practice should be taught. This has the advantage of demonstrating directly the relevance of physics knowledge. The best educators of physics for radiologists and by extension all healthcare professions are those who have both physics and clinical knowledge, as the physicist must “translate” the physics to the clinical situation. Another advantage of this approach is that the student is more likely to retain the material after graduation. But perhaps the greatest advantage is that this approach “preserves the image of the physicist as possessing valuable and occult knowledge” and that when complex situations arise in their practice the radiologists would feel the “need to consult with their medical physics colleagues”. Dixon countered these arguments by saying that it is more important to use the time available to build firm broad conceptual foundations as there are physical concepts which though not relevant at the time of learning could become relevant later in particular with the rapid expansion of technology. He cites as example the case of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) by saying “in the 70s who would have thought that nuclear spins would play any role in radiology?”

Current developments in biomedical device education for the healthcare professions at the IHC
Biomedical Physics at the IHC is taking a leading role in researching and developing biomedical device physics curricula for the healthcare professions at the European level. Our research programme over the last four years has resulted in seven research papers (Caruana & Plasek, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2005a, 2005b, 2004a, 2004b) and several presentations at international meetings. Learning outcome competence inventories (in the format required by the Bologna process) for biomedical device physics education in Europe have already been published for diagnostic radiography, nursing and medicine (Caruana & Plasek, 2006a, 2006c, 2005a). These were developed following a survey of healthcare professional curricula across Europe and an in-depth study of associated themes gleaned from the professional literature (e.g., role development in the various professions). Inventories for other health professions are in the pipeline. The European Federation of Medical Physics has invited the author of this article to set up a European Special Interest Group to work with other healthcare professional groups to produce suitable European curricula for them. Through a collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine and Healthcare, University of Brno, Czech Republic (which houses all the healthcare professions under one roof) the unit ‘Principles of medical device science’ offered at the IHC and currently undertaken by B.Sc. Radiography and B.Sc. Medical Laboratory Science students will this year be further developed so that it can be offered as a shared cross-disciplinary unit to the other healthcare professions at both the IHC and the Faculty of Medicine. The Department of

July – September
Within the Socrates Erasmus Project there was the Communication Therapy Division Staff/Student mobility intensive programme continued in the summer months with seven outgoing CT students and 2 CT members of staff participating at the Faculty of Medicine, Strasbourg for a fifteen-day visit.

Data Collection for the Marie Curie Host Fellowship FP6-2002-Mobility-3 project kicked off in July 2006 since the design and printing of the tests took several months to complete. Data collection involved two home visits per child. Consent forms were collected from each child’s parent/carer during the home visits. Approximately, 300 children had been visited up till submission of this report.

Under the professional development initiative of the Communication Therapy Division, in September supervising clinicians were invited to a half-day seminar organised by the Division in connection with clinical placements of students.

In July the Health Services Management Division hosted a visit from the University of Brno in which the possibility of collaboration between the two institutions was discussed.

Dr N. Azzopardi Muscat attended a high level expert conference in September organised by the Finnish Presidency on the theme of “Health in all Policies” in Kuopio. Dr Azzopardi Muscat was the rapporteur for the workshop on Strategies to reduce Alcohol related harm.

The HSM Division hosted Dr Sushma Acquila from Imperial College London who was the visiting external examiner for the Division.

Professor Clive Mulholland from the University of Ulster, UK, was visiting external examiner for the Final Comprehensive Examinations in the Medical Laboratory Science Division held in 2006. Sixteen students completed the MLS course successfully.

Dr Donia Baldacchino presented a paper on the ‘Stress of Albanian and Maltese Students’ and a paper on ‘Nursing Competencies: Tuning Project’ in February 2006 in the RCN Nursing Education Conference. Another paper was presented in February 2006 by Ms Jaccarini in the HENRE conference on ‘Challenges of the Nursing Development in the Tuning Project’.

Ms Nathalie Buhagiar, from the Occupational Therapy Division attended a workshop on “Integrating Neurodevelopmental treatment and Sensory Integration principles: A hands on approach”, at Chertsey, Surrey, UK. This workshop would enable therapists expand treatment options using Sensory Integration and Neurodevelopmental treatment frames of reference.

The course coordinator –Mark Sacco attended conferences organized by the Association of European Physiotherapists in Higher Education (ENPHE) that served as a bridge between European countries and Institutes and cemented the interchange of ideas to improve the Physiotherapy course.

Continuous fine-tuning and revision of course objectives for the B.Sc. (Hons) (Physiotherapy) in alignment with proposed curricular changes facilitated the adoption of a new teaching framework on the Physiotherapy studies course that now is in conformity with ECTS. The course objectives started being rewritten in December and are in the process of completion.

The external examiner for the Radiography course was Dr Patrick Brennan, from University College Dublin, Ireland. Dr Brennan had previously visited the IHC before as a visiting lecturer in Digital Imaging. This was his second visit as external examiner to the Division. In his report Dr Brennan commented about the high standards achieved by the Division.
Ms Antoinette Attard presented a paper on ‘Breast Care Awareness’ in a local conference entitled Women’s Health: Improving Outcomes organized by the Educational Executive Committee of the Malta Nurses and Midwives Union.

Ms Rita Borg Xuereb, as part of the Midwives Association of Malta organized a conference on 5th May 2006 on ‘Emotional Well being during pregnancy and after childbirth’ where Ms Borg Xuereb presented a paper on the “Transition to Parenthood”.

The Division of Occupational Therapy Studies hosted two students from Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia (Canada) on a six-week clinical internship which was held in May at the occupational therapy clinic of St. Luke’s Hospital. This clinical placement was organised within the framework of the bilateral agreement in existence between this Canadian university and the University of Malta.

Also in May, the Division hosted Jennifer Creek who taught a course in Advanced Psychosocial Clinical Skills. Ms Creek is the foremost authority in Psychosocial Occupational Therapy in the United Kingdom and is the author of a number of books in this area of practice. She is also a researcher for the College of Occupational Therapists (UK) as well as a freelance practitioner. Ms Creek gave an important contribution to the students and her continuing support as well as accessibility were greatly appreciated, especially considering her very busy international schedule.

In June, Mr René Mifsud and Ms Marjorie Bonello attended the 30th Annual Conference and Exhibition of the College of Occupational Therapists (UK) held in Cardiff, Wales. This is the key conference for occupational therapists in the United Kingdom and possibly the major conference of this discipline in Europe. It provides a wide range of CPD opportunities for occupational therapists in clinical practice, research and education including paper presentations, seminars, workshops, roundtables, poster presentations and exhibitor workshops. The conference afforded the attendees the possibility of networking and meeting prominent figures in the field. Most notable was the meeting held with Anne Lawson-Porter who is head of Education and Learning.

Ms Nathalie Buhagiar gave a presentation, during a workshop in June on Dyspraxia, on “Developmental Coordination Disorder - A framework for evaluation and intervention”. This workshop, which was held at the Institute of Health Care, was part of the Continuing Medical Education Seminars.

The Final Comprehensive Examination of the Physiotherapy Division was moderated by Dr James Selfe from the University of Central Lancashire. His report with regard to examination procedures and certain management policies helped the Division in the process of the continuous development of the Physiotherapy Course.

The Physiotherapy Division staff-complement, now strengthened by three new members of staff employed in 2005, is placing emphasis on the improvement of the clinical and academic level of the course of studies through sharing of teaching subjects. Other members of staff undertook clinical teaching in association with ward staff and other members of the interdisciplinary team.

Students from overseas are making use of the facilities offered by the Physiotherapy division to attend clinical placements in Malta under the Erasmus agreement. The Physiotherapy Division has received various students from European countries who spent time in Malta mostly in the clinical field. Countries of origin were Finland, Germany, Holland, Italy, Norway and Sweden. These clinical placements were spread throughout the year.


Biomedical Physics at Brno has one of the best-developed student medical device laboratories in Europe. This collaboration would lead to the first systematically researched shared cross-disciplinary medical device curriculum in Europe. The resulting papers will be presented at the first European Conference on Medical Physics organized by the European Federation of Medical Physics in Pisa, Italy in September 2007.

References

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organised in order to provide the students with an insight into Maltese history and culture. The students also had the opportunity to visit the new hospital, Mater Dei.

At the end of the exchange the transcripts were presented to the students by the Director at a reception to mark the end of the exchange. During the evaluation programme the students remarked very positively about their experience in Malta.

April – June

During the month of April Helen Grech, from the Communication Therapy Division, attended conferences in Cairo and in Alexandria in Egypt, whilst in June DanielaGatt, attended one in Croatia.

In April, The Environmental Health Division hosted a visiting lecturer in Food Policy, Dr Charles Clutterbuck, who lectured to PQ Diploma in Nutrition and Dietetics students. Dr Clutterbuck is a lecturer and consultant in Food Policy and works closely with Professor Tim Lang, the Division’s previous Food Policy lecturer.

Ann McElhatton attended the 9th World Congress on Environmental Health, Trinity College Dublin in June.

Dr N. Azzopardi Muscat and Dr K. Grech were Chair and member respectively of the Ministry Task Force entrusted with the organisation of a national consultation process for the preparation of the National Action Plan on Health and Long-term Care. A national consultative seminar was held on the 16th May 2006. The Health Services Management Division was also involved in the preparation of the write up for the report which appeared as Chapter 4 in the “Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Malta 2006-2008”. This report was published by the European Commission.

In June, Dr N. Azzopardi Muscat and Dr K. Grech attended the preparatory meeting for the EUPHA Scientific meeting of 2006 in Montreux. The work involved the selection of abstracts and workshops for the scientific meeting that was to take place in November 2006.

During the month of May, the Medical Laboratory Science Division’s CPD programme was held on “Avian Influenza – The Next Pandemic?” in conjunction with the Pathology Department, St. Luke’s Hospital, and the Malta College of Pathologists. The foreign guest speaker was Dr Tin Brooks from the UK. Various local speakers contributed to this programme. These included Dr Chris Barbara, Dr Charles Savona Ventura, Dr Dennis Vella Baldacchino and Dr Michael Borg.

In May, Professor Angela Xueb presented research work conducted in her DNA Laboratory entitled “A genomewide linkage scan in a family with a highly penetrant form of osteoporosis” at the 33rd Symposium of the European Calcified Tissue Society held in Prague between the 10th and 14th May. This work was subsequently published in the journal Calcified Tissue International.

The Nursing and Midwifery Division hosted, visiting lecturer, Professor Inga Rahm Hallberg RNT, FEANS, who is the Former Deputy Dean of the Medical Faculty Deputy, Head of Unit for Caring Sciences, Coordinator at the Vardal Institute at The Swedish Institute for Health Sciences and the Department of Nursing, Lund University, Sweden. Her clinical speciality is Psychiatric Nursing and Geriatric Care. Professor Hallberg’s thesis was entitled ‘Vocally Disruptive Behaviour in Severely Demented Patients in Relation to Institutional Care Provided’, which can be found at Umea University Medical Dissertations, New Series No 261-