



Competition finalists show they have the pharmacy RX Factor



RX Factor candidates attended the London auditions

Finding the future face of pharmacy was the name of the game last month as finalists for the pharmacy RX Factor competition attended auditions in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh.

The competition, launched in May, will identify spokespeople to support the Society's four consumer media campaigns during 2009.

More than 70 entries were received and the 13 finalists for England were put through their paces in early August when they were interviewed by a judging panel and screen tested at the Society's London offices.



Steve Churton, the Society's President said: "The panel were greatly impressed by the quality of entries to the RX Factor. There are members out there with a real passion for promoting pharmacy and we plan to harness their enthusiasm for the benefit of the profession. Although there can

only be four winners the Society will work with other RX factor entrants and develop them into regional media spokespeople."

RX Factor finalist William Slain from Doncaster said, "The Society is grasping the media nettle and working hard to promote the profession to the public. It was really exciting to be part of this competition and I think all the finalists had something positive to take away from the experience."

The RX Factor winners will be announced at the British Pharmaceutical Conference on Sunday 7 September.



Rx Factor candidate Waqas Ahmad is put through his paces

NEWSROUND

Play your part in shaping regulation!

The Department of Health in England and the Scottish Government will soon launch a joint consultation on proposals contained within the Pharmacy Order 2009 to establish a new regulator for pharmacy — the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC).

The consultation provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other relevant stakeholders to

play a part in the shaping of the new pharmacy regulator. The consultation will contribute to ensuring that the GPhC is fit for the future regulation of pharmacy and is capable of identifying and responding quickly to change.

The Society is encouraging all members and wider stakeholders to participate in this consultation, which will be available on the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk.

Carnival puts fun into pharmacy



Staff from the Society's museum hosted "Ye Olde Apothecary and Alchemy Shoppe" at Waterloo Carnival in July. The event was organised by Waterloo Quarter Business Alliance and was designed to bring the community closer together. The theme of the event was the Wizard of Oz and visitors to the Shoppe had the opportunity to make chamomile and cucumber hand lotion to take home or enjoy chewing on a liquorice leech. More than 100 people visited the Shoppe over the course of the day.

CD report has pharmacy input

The Society contributed to a Healthcare Commission (HC) report, "The safer management of Controlled Drugs". The document features a section written by the Society in "Appendix 2: Reports from partner organisations".

The report provides an overview of the steps taken to improve monitoring of CDs since new

regulations came into effect in England on 1 January 2007. It found that there has been significant progress in work to ensure that CDs are managed more safely and effectively but that further work was needed.

The report is available for download from the HC website at www.healthcarecommission.org.uk.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS



Last month 215 of you took part in the fourth ethical dilemma, which I hope you found useful.

Seventy-eight per cent of you chose answer C, that when faced with a child of 12 years old who has come into your pharmacy with a prescription for amoxicillin for his mother, you would dispense the medicine and ring the mother to discuss the matter.

For those of you who didn't take part you can still get involved as last month's dilemma is still available online.

All you have to do is visit myRPSGB on the Society's website at www.rpsgb.org to pick which of the options you would follow.

Once on the home page click on the grey panel on the right hand side titled "myRPSGB". All you then need is either your registration number or retention fee form number to set up your account.

If you do not have these or need assistance then please contact the registration team at

the Society on 020 7572 2532 or e-mail registration@rpsgb.org

The ethical dilemma is available at my RPSGB and you will receive immediate feedback about the option you chose. A breakdown of responses is provided in the next edition of *Your Society*.

Priya Sejpal, head of ethics

ETHICAL DILEMMA 5

A woman requests an emergency salbutamol inhaler late on a Friday, but she does not appear to be having an asthma attack or suffering from shortness of breath. She says her inhaler has run out. What do you do?

- A. Refer her to the doctor for a prescription, as the surgery is open
- B. "Loan" her an inhaler until she brings in a prescription.
- C. Supply the salbutamol inhaler as an emergency supply

NEWSROUND

Pharmacy and Society's historic links to Lambeth on display

The Society's museum has launched a new display that investigates the links between the area surrounding the its London headquarters in Lambeth and the history of pharmacy.

The display in the foyer of the Society's headquarters building provides visitors with an overview of Lambeth and its pharmacy connections from delFTWARE drug jars made in the area in the 1600s to the arrival of the Society itself in the area in 1976.

Objects on display include a beautiful water filter made by Doulton and Company on Lambeth High Street in the 1880s, and a range of pots, dating from 1700 to the 1950s, used to sell Singleton's Eye Ointment, made nearby on Lambeth Road.

The display is part of the museum's Lambeth-themed programme, which accompanies a Heritage Lottery Fund audience development scheme designed to engage people living locally with the museum collections.

The next part of this programme, to be launched on 20 September, will be a pharmacy-themed walk around the local area.

Briony Hudson, keeper of the museum collections, said: "Although the Society did not move to Lambeth because of its historical pharmacy links, it is right at the centre of an incredibly important area for the history of medicines and health. For more than 350 years, pharmacy has been central to this part of London."

The display is in the reception of the Society's London office, 1 Lambeth High Street SE1 7JN, and is available to visit free of charge, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For more information, please contact the museum office on 020 7572 2210.

Water filter made by Doulton and Company on Lambeth High Street in the 1880s



Pharmacy case studies

The Society will launch 12 case studies at September's British Pharmaceutical Conference in Manchester.

The case studies show the full range of work pharmacists undertake and highlight how pharmacy practice has played an

integral part in improving the lives of patients across Great Britain.

Subjects include: helping fight obesity, screening for heart disease risk, tackling sexual health on the high street, preventing medication errors and hospital readmissions, and promoting men's health.

Pharmacy in Action: Case Study
Scottish minor ailment service

Alan Oeme, pharmacy manager, Lindsay & Gilmore Pharmacies, Stockbridge, Edinburgh, Scotland

MINOR AILMENT SERVICE, SCOTLAND
"Scottish pharmacies have been providing a minor ailment service for..."

WHY THE SERVICE IS NEEDED
"In the past, a lot of GP time was wasted on minor ailments, that a pharmacist would have been able to..."

HOW THE SERVICE WORKS
"To be eligible, patients first need to be registered with a GP in Scotland and they have to be exempt from..."

One of the Society's new case studies

New LEB classifications

The Society is set to amend the way Law and Ethics Bulletins are classified.

The bulletins are to be classified into three subcategories to assist the profession in identifying the content.

The three new headings are:

- Law and Ethics Bulletin: Legislation and clarification
- Law and Ethics Bulletin: Ethics and clarification
- Law and Ethics Bulletin:

Learning from fitness to practise hearings and other incidents

In addition, Law and Ethics Bulletins issued in the past five years are to be updated and reclassified into the categories above. Priya Sejjal, head of professional ethics at the Society, said: "We are undertaking this work to make it easy to identify the content of the LEB from its title. We hope the membership will benefit from this initiative."

Postgraduate bursaries available

The Leverhulme Trade Charities Trust has recently launched postgraduate bursaries designed to provide support for eligible UK students (including pharmacists), who are in financial need and undertaking a full-time postgraduate degree course at an institution in the United Kingdom.

The maximum value of the bursary is £5,000 per annum.

For full details of the scheme, visit www.leverhulme-trade.org.uk, from where an application form and guidance notes can be downloaded.

The closing date for applications is 1 October 2008.

NOTES FROM JEREMY HOLMES CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Transcom tuna sandwich

I'm not a great fan of stand-up buffet lunches. Plate in one hand, drink in the other, so what do you use to eat with? You put the drink down, and then you can't find your glass again.

I was reminded of this at the second Transitional Committee (Transcom) meeting — which actually went very well, never mind the lunch — and it struck me I've got to keep tabs on two more important things at the same time.

On the one hand, we're creating a new professional body (through TransCom) and on the other we're creating a new regulator (the primary legislation for which received Royal assent at the end of July). But we also have to eat — in other words, we've got to get the "day job" done as well.

In fact the team at the Society is doing the day job extremely well. The preregistration team, for example, recently put 1,200 new pharmacists on the register, including all the necessary checks, in the space of eight days. They also responded to 6,000 telephone enquiries in the month of July alone. The new professional services directorate is producing practical guidance on chlamydia screening and treatment, which is a key service in the English pharmacy White Paper. The policy and communications directorate is linking our research, our policy thinking and our communications better than ever before. And, of course, the Society-led British Pharmaceutical Conference, which runs from September 7 to 9, is an impressive event by anyone's standards.

But as I munched my tuna sandwich I also realised what a great step forward we're making

in working with other organisations. Transcom is a genuinely collaborative effort involving representatives from across all sectors of pharmacy, including primary care, secondary care and academia. We recently had an all-staff meeting at the Society where I talked about our "mission". It is indeed to create two new bodies that are fit for purpose and sustainable, but also to continue to provide professional and regulatory leadership in the meantime. We're doing that.

We had biscuits not sandwiches at the all-staff meeting, but the best sandwiches I've ever tasted were when I lived in New York. New York delis fill their sandwiches so full they're actually domed. And the offering at the counter is irresistible. Something for every taste. The new professional body can learn from that — every member needs to feel his or her taste has been catered for, and what they're going to get is a full package that represents real value for money. That's what Transcom is working on — and the signs are very good.

If you responded to the survey in *The Pharmaceutical Journal* on who should be members of the new professional body, thank you. The findings of that survey are an important input to Transcom. Go to www.transitionalcommittee.com to post a comment or suggestion.

There will be other issues we want to get your views on, so please look out for further questions in *The Journal*, and on *PJ Online* (www.pjonline.com) where you can also join in debates on a whole range of topics — except possibly sandwiches.

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FOCUS ON KEITH RIDGE ENGLAND'S CHIEF PHARMACIST

Historic times for the profession

Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer at the Department of Health, was interviewed recently

Question: Can you give us a brief history of your career to date?

KR: I have been fortunate to have worked in many aspects of pharmacy. Having done my undergraduate training in London, I did my preregistration at the General Hospital in Birmingham. I then moved to Harold Wood Hospital in Essex to do a basic grade job during which I also did regular community pharmacy locums. I then moved to Roche Pharmaceuticals where I was involved in formulation R&D.

Missing the patient contact, after two years I returned to hospital pharmacy at the Whittington Hospital in North London. The Whittington kindly supported me through an MSc in clinical pharmacy. After completing this, I returned to the Whittington and eventually became clinical pharmacy manager.

I was then seconded to the joint University of London/University of Manchester research team evaluating the impact of ward-based dispensing automation on the medicines system at Luton and Dunstable hospital. My PhD emerged from this project. After returning to the Whittington, I was recruited by the Department of Health to lead on hospital pharmacy and prescribing.

Four years later I moved to Glasgow as chief pharmacist for North Glasgow University Hospitals NHS Trust. In 2005, I returned to England as director of pharmacy at University Hospitals, Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. I took up my present position in March 2006.

Question: What is the single most important thing you would like to achieve in the next 12 months and how do you hope to do it?

KR: I am responsible for the establishment of the new pharmacy regulator — the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). We are on track, Parliamentary time and process permitting, to have it operational by 2010. While I am technically the lead, it's my team at the Department, led by Liz Dimond, who will make sure it happens. And they can't do it without the help of many people, including staff at the Society and the members of the Pharmacy Regulation and Leadership Oversight Group (PRLOG), chaired by Ken Jarrold. It's a team effort.

So, over the next 12 months I would like to see continued good progress because without a functioning pharmacy regulator, little is possible in pharmacy.



Question: What will be the next steps now that the pharmacy White Paper has been published? Will it be followed by consultations, regulations, or both?

KR: There will be a consultation on the White Paper on a range of matters and in particular things that affect the community pharmacy contractual framework and control of entry systems. Regulatory changes will be needed to implement many of these changes. We are also planning to appoint two national clinical directors in pharmacy during the summer. This is particularly exciting for me and will also help with the workload.

Question: When might changes outlined in the White Paper actually take effect?

KR: I have heard some people say that the action plan is open ended or actions are dependent on various groups. Well, what do you expect when a considerable part is dependent on the outcomes of negotiations? We are already working towards some of the actions being implemented through the listening events currently under way, together with early discussions with NHS employers and others.

There are also other dependencies, such as the forthcoming primary and community care strategy, part of Lord Darzi's next stage review. Overall the White Paper is a blueprint for pharmacy covering the next few years and is more about pharmacy grabbing the opportunities presented, than me or the DoH simply implementing the White Paper.

Question: What was your impression of the Darzi engagement events in London and Manchester and what key messages did you pick up to pass on to Lord Darzi?

KR: I thought the events went really well. We

tried to make the events as interactive as possible to give pharmacy the opportunity to interact with and question Lord Darzi (at the London event only) and senior officials from the DoH. The feedback from the audience at both events was very positive. At the Manchester event I agreed with the audience what the key messages to feed back to Lord Darzi should be. These were:

- Pharmacy wants to be actively involved in the next stage review and at the heart of local discussions
- Pharmacy sees integrated clinical services including those which impact on long term conditions and public health as the right way forward
- There are challenges posed by practice-based commissioning and how contractual arrangements take account of these
- There is a need for strong national and local leadership

These were reflected at the London event and have all been picked up in the pharmacy White Paper.

Question: Do you think that Darzi is taking on board the message that pharmacy has a lot of potential and a lot to offer?

KR: Absolutely. And it's important to remember that the pharmacy White Paper is supported by the whole Government, not just Lord Darzi. And I don't think anyone can argue that the pharmacy White Paper does anything other than urge pharmacy to utilise its potential to get more involved with the clinical care of patients and the public.

Question: Anything else to add?

KR: These should be historic times for pharmacy — there has been a comprehensive White Paper on pharmacy in England and new arrangements for professional leadership and regulation, support the desire within much of the profession to provide more clinical services to patients. But they will only be truly historic times if everyone embraces the necessary changes. It will need the whole pharmacy family to pull together to make the most of the opportunities in the White Paper and to make significant improvements to the pharmaceutical care of the public and patients. And let's all remember that's why health professionals exist — to serve both patients and the public. So get involved!

This interview first appeared in the summer issue of Pharmacy Now, the electronic magazine of the Society's English Pharmacy Board.

YOUR SOCIETY

SUPPORTING THE PROFESSION

Society showcases the profession at conferences and exhibitions



BPC is the perfect event for the Society to engage with its members

Heidi Wright, the Society's head of practice, explains how the Society's professional services directorate works to raise the profile of the Society and pharmacy with external stakeholders by attending conferences and exhibitions during the year.

The aim of the Society attending practice events is to promote the role of pharmacy within the NHS — particularly at primary care based conferences.

The events have been really successful this year and we are definitely getting the desired message across.

Below is a summary of some of the events the Society has attended and plans to attend in 2008.

Primary Care 2008

The Primary Care 2008 conference in May provided an opportunity to promote the pharmacy profession, in particular the benefits of community pharmacy, accessibility, commissioning and more general services.

The Society's stand was well visited and the main lines of questioning included the type of services pharmacists could provide, the community pharmacy contract, the English pharmacy White Paper and non-medical prescribing.

Two presentations were given by Society staff — one on the "responsible pharmacist" and a further one on "POM-to-P switches and self care".

NHS Confederation

The main focus of the Society's contribution to the NHS Confederation conference in June was pharmacy leadership — integrating pharmacy into the primary care team, and empowering pharmacists to develop and deliver local services.

Interest in the Society's stand extended to primary care trust chief executives and directors, some of whom began their careers as pharmacists and were keen to explore ways of linking in to the new professional body. A number of important links were made with national and regional organisations and useful conversations ensued. There was also much interest in "Leading across boundaries", the Society's practical leadership programme, which successfully integrates pharmacy into multidisciplinary teams, and empowers pharmacists to develop and deliver local services.

BPC 2008

At the British Pharmaceutical Conference in September, the Society will be highlighting the services it offers to its members.

Staff will also be involved in presentations on the "responsible pharmacist" and "supporting

poorly performing pharmacists". "Leading across boundaries" will be featured as part of a Sunday session.

UK Pharmacy Show

People attending the UK Pharmacy Show in October will be able to feedback to Society staff what they would like the new professional body to provide in the future.

NHS Alliance

At the NHS Alliance conference the Society will be involved in two presentations: one on self care and minor ailments (with the National Pharmacy Association) and another on practitioners with a special interest.

The aim is to promote the role of community and primary care pharmacists to other primary care managers, commissioners and healthcare professionals.

Primary Care Live

The Primary Care Live meeting takes place in October in London and in November in Manchester.

Presentations will be given on the "responsible pharmacist" at both of these conferences and Society staff will be chairing the community pharmacy conference stream.

VETERINARY PHARMACISTS GROUP

Rise in number of dogs poisoned

It may seem like a treat but giving chocolate, grapes, raisins or sultanas to man's best friend could be life threatening. Record numbers of dogs are being poisoned, particularly with chocolate (*Daily Mail* online, 14 July 2008). There has been an almost 50 per cent rise in the number of dogs falling ill because of poisoning. In 2006, vets made 790 emergency calls about chocolate poisoning to the Veterinary Poisons Information Service. Last year, the figure was 1,166. And the number of pets

poisoned by eating grapes, raisins or sultanas has almost doubled from 117 in 2006 to 224 last year.

Chocolate contains theobromine, a naturally occurring stimulant found in the cocoa bean that affects the central nervous system and heart. It can kill a dog. Most at risk are scavenging-type dogs, such as labradors and Jack Russells. They find chocolate about the home and are attracted to the smell. The danger depends on the size of the dog and the type of chocolate. Darker and more expensive chocolate contains

more theobromine. Humans and cats have metabolisms that can cope with theobromine.

Toxins in grapes, raisins and sultanas present a risk of renal failure in dogs. In some cases, small dogs have died after eating as few as four grapes. Many owners are unaware of the dangers and have fed their pets cake and biscuits containing chocolate or grapes. In other cases the animals have helped themselves.

There has also been a rise in the number of dogs eating analgesics.

The number of dogs eating ibuprofen has risen by 22 per cent, paracetamol by 20 per cent and aspirin by 24 per cent. These can sometimes be fatal.

The Veterinary Poisons Information Service was launched in 1992 by the London and Leeds branches of the National Poisons Information Service. It provides 24-hour information to vets and animal welfare organisations to aid their management of cases of acute poisoning in animals (tel 020 7635 9195).

Veterinary pharmacy education programme



Residential course participants outside Harper Adams University College together with course tutors Sarah Cockbill (standing second from left) and Steven Kayne (standing right)

Nine pharmacists, one vet and one support staff member completed an intensive week of study at Harper Adams University College in Shropshire in July. Lectures were given on topics in modules 3 and 4 of the veterinary pharmacy diploma programme, and there were visits to cattle, sheep, poultry and pig units.

All teaching materials for veterinary pharmacy education

programme have been now uploaded to the web, where access is password-protected. Information on the courses available and an application form are available at www.vpep.net.

Modules 1 and 2 (certificate in companion animal health care) start again in January 2009. The closing date for applications is 20 November 2008. Overseas pharmacists are welcome.

Livestock travelling times and space allowances to be reviewed

The European Commission has been consulting with members of the public, relevant stakeholders and national authorities with a

view to introducing into legislation new livestock travelling times and space allowances, and to strengthening enforcement.

Rabies prevention should not be neglected

The mission of World Rabies Day, to be held on 28 September, is to raise awareness about the impact of human and animal rabies, how easy it is to prevent the disease, and how to eliminate the main global sources.

Even though the major impact of rabies occurs in regions of the world with many other problems, rabies should no longer be neglected — the tools and

technology for human rabies prevention and dog rabies elimination are available. Even though human rabies is 100 per cent preventable, more than 55,000 people die each year, mostly in areas of the world that still have dog-to-dog transmission.

For more information see the World Rabies Day website (www.worldrabiesday.org).

Cats may increase risk of eczema in babies

Researchers have uncovered a link between eczema and a specific inherited gene that normally works by producing a protein that protects the skin. However, in around one in 10 children this gene does not work properly, leaving them more prone to allergy.

Having a cat further increases the risk of developing eczema, they claim. Exposure to dogs did not make any difference to the risk. The researchers concluded that those who carry the defective gene may need to avoid cats, but not dogs, in early life. (*Daily Telegraph*, 24 June 2008).

All horses born in the EU to be microchipped

All horses born after June next year will need to be identified by microchip and carry a single identification document (passport), according to new EU regulation on the identification of horses, which will apply from 2009.

However, member states may authorise "suitable alternative methods" as long as these allow a correct identification of the horse without the double issuing of identification documents.

Transponders should be implanted "between the poll and the withers in the middle of the neck, in the area of the nuchal ligament".

SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS

Have fun, stay safe! — Sheffield pharmacist's summer message

Pharmacist James Wood took to the streets of Sheffield in July — reminding young people to have fun but to stay safe during the summer.

The “Feeling Hot” campaign was organised by the Centre for Sexual Health and HIV to promote the services of NHS Sheffield. Advice was offered by healthcare professionals about looking after sexual health and protecting against unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, protecting against the effects of the sun and drinking alcohol responsibly.

James, who works at Wicker Pharmacy in Sheffield city centre, provided expert advice and handed out posters and cards advertising sexual health services. He said of the event: “It was a fun and engaging way to get important health messages out to young people and their parents.

“Summer is the time of year when young people go on holiday and spend more time outdoors.

“The aim of the day was to encourage young people to have fun this summer while ensuring that the fun they have is safe.

“As expert healthcare professionals, pharmacists can play a key role in the delivery of this information and are available for advice without obtaining an appointment.

“Pharmacy has a key role in sexual health. At Wicker Pharmacy, we provide additional services, including chlamydia screening, emergency hormonal contraception and teenage pregnancy testing, and we are open 365 days a year.”



James Wood (left) promotes the “Feeling Hot” campaign

Sonia communicates her love of science



Sonia Patel is inspiring young people to engage with science

A Kent pharmacist, who is committed to inspiring young people to engage with science, has been selected to represent pharmaceutical company Pfizer in a global initiative to promote the human issues and faces behind scientific research.

Sonia Patel, 28, of Canterbury, joined the company five years ago and worked with the team involved in the company's groundbreaking HIV research.

Sonia is featured among scientists talking about their work in the laboratories and beyond in Pfizer's science awareness programme promoting exceptional researchers, “Think science now”.

The programme links with www.bigthink.com — an interactive social networking site providing information and discussions on politics, law, business and science as a means to support greater public dialogue on thought-provoking issues.