

societal autonomy); justice (for all); beneficence; and non-maleficence. The above arguments in favour of international recruitment produce an inherent conflict between the autonomy of professionals and wider society, towards which they have some responsibility. They also pose pertinent questions about justice for all, especially in the most deprived countries. The principles of beneficence and non-maleficence, when extended to a societal perspective, also suggest a strong case for providing benefit to and not causing harm to communities as a whole. Some points of view would suggest that this is what occurs when healthcare professionals migrate for their individual benefit.

The criticism is mainly systemic and seems to be directed largely towards the Department of Health, but also, to a certain degree, towards the Royal Colleges and the governments of the donor countries for their complicity in the systemic asset stripping of these already deprived societies. Professional migration is not a new phenomenon but it has increased massively in recent years in response to policy development in recipient countries, and donor countries have consequently seen an exodus of the middle generations of professionals.

Various measures have been proposed and implemented by donor and host countries to mitigate the effects of this exodus. Some countries train their doctors in the local language, which also helps to retain them. This may not be the most progressive solution

to the problem, but more realistic solutions have also been proposed. These include financial reparation to the donor country, an obligation on doctors to spend a certain amount of time in the public health service in the donor country, and improvement in training and employment conditions in both developing and developed countries. There has also been pressure on developed countries to restrict immigration from certain deprived countries. The Department of Health has made a start in this direction by having a code of ethics to guide its international recruitment, but its critics suggest that success has been merely symbolic, owing to the complicity of governments of developing nations like India. A process of reciprocal recognition of qualification may help redress the longer-term imbalance, as a significant number of doctors would like to go back to work in their own countries but find it difficult to do so, because of the lack of parallel recognition of qualifications obtained in a different training system.

The issue needs to be debated in international forums such as the World Health Organization and the United Nations. It is not in the interests of either the professionals who have migrated or the host country to keep the debate going. The governments in the donor countries have not been particularly proactive in addressing the conflict. In these circumstances the onus to keep the debate alive is on professional organisations like the Royal Colleges and the General Medical Council.

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NEWS AND NOTES

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International Associates

The introduction of membership of the College's International Divisions via the title of 'International Associates' has attracted considerable interest. Since January 2005, 11 psychiatrists have been accepted in this role, which allows them to be active in their respective International Divisions and receive all the publications of the College that members receive. More details can be found on the College website at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/membership/about.htm>

Volunteer schemes for senior psychiatrists and specialist registrars

Our database is now up and running, and there are a good number of experienced colleagues willing

to offer their expertise. We hope that the database will now become known throughout the International Divisions and will be of considerable assistance to services lacking specific types of experience and knowledge. Full details of both schemes are available on the College website at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/college/spcomm/bia/senior.htm>

International Divisions at the College annual meeting in Glasgow, 10–13 July 2006

For the first time, all six International Divisions of the College will have their own sessions at the College meeting in 2006 and there will be a joint session of the College and the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) involving the Presidents of the two organisations.

On the volunteer schemes, see the report by Andrew Sims and Ruth Sims on page 18 of this issue

Human rights abuses

The College has agreed to set up a new committee to concern itself with human rights issues. Its terms of reference and relationship to WPA responsibilities are to be clarified and agreed in the coming months.

College links with Sociedad Española de Psiquiatría (SEP)

The Presidents of the College and the Sociedad Española de Psiquiatría (SEP) have drafted an agreement on a general framework for potential collaboration between the organisations in a wide range of activities over the next 4 years, including working within the framework of the European International Division of the College.

World Congress of Psychiatry, Cairo, September 2005

The WPA held its 13th World Congress in Cairo last September. It was the first to be held on the continent of Africa and was attended by more than 5000 psychiatrists, of whom around 500 were from the UK.

The College and its Board of International Affairs were prominent in many aspects of the Congress. The College exhibition stand with its publications was popular, as were applications to become an International Associate of the College.

The College and its Middle Eastern Division hosted a reception attended by many leaders of psychiatric organisations around the world. The hospitality of Dr Nasser Loza, chair of the Middle Eastern Division, was much appreciated.

College links with the Ministry of Health and Population, Egypt

During the course of the Cairo conference in September, the Minister of Health, His Excellency Professor Awad Tag-El-Din, invited the College President, Professor Sheila Hollins, and other senior officers to meet with him. Discussions led to a memorandum of understanding to collaborate in a number of areas, including examinations, exchange schemes, public education, research, continuing professional development and carers' rights. The Middle Eastern Division of the College will be actively involved in any collaboration.

BIA session at Cairo

The College's Board of International Affairs organised a session with representation from all six of its International Divisions at the WPA conference in Cairo. The session was chaired by Professor Hamid Ghodse and Dr Afzal Javed. It was attended by a number of College members, including the President, Professor Sheila Hollins, and immediate past President, Dr Mike Shooter. Representatives of five of the Divisions

presented papers. The speakers included Professor George Christodoulou and Dr Athanassios Douzenis (European Division), Professor Nalaka Mendis (South Asian Division), Professor M. P. Deva (Western Pacific Division), Dr Nasar Loza (Middle Eastern Division) and Dr Frank Njenga (African Division). It was a very lively session: speakers described in detail the various potential roles of their Divisions in contributing to the further development of mental health services, as well as teaching and training in their respective regions and how interactions with the College could facilitate this.

Business meeting of the Middle Eastern Division

A business meeting of the Middle Eastern Division was held during the Cairo congress, which was attended by Members and Fellows from the region. Discussions took place regarding developing communications, developing representation by country within the Division and future regional meetings of the College. Dr Fuad Antun from the Lebanon proposed hosting a meeting in Beirut during 2006.

Recruitment of psychiatrists

During the General Assembly, the College raised concerns about shortages of psychiatrists and active recruitment from countries with less developed services by those with more developed services. The WPA Assembly agreed to establish a task force to consider this important issue and some specific proposals of the College.

WPA elections

Members of the College were elected to the executive of the WPA. These included Professor Mario Maj (as President Elect) and Professor Alan Tasman (Secretary for Education), adding to the existing College members on the executive (Professor John Cox and Professor Sam Tyano).

The new executive of the WPA began office during the congress. Its members are:

- Professor Juan Mezzich – President
- Professor Mario Maj – President Elect
- Professor John Cox – Secretary-General
- Professor Sam Tyano – Secretary for Finances
- Professor Alan Tasman – Secretary for Education
- Professor Helen Herrman – Secretary for Publications
- Professor Pedro Ruiz – Secretary for Meetings
- Professor Miguel Jorge – Secretary for Scientific Sections

In other elections, Dr Michel Botbol from France was elected as the representative for the Western European Zone – the Zone of which the College is a member. He takes over at the end of the 6-year term of Dr Brian Martindale from the College.