

Hong Kong

- ahead of the game

In September 2003, I had the pleasure and honour to be invited to Hong Kong as the external examiner and advisor for the Post Graduate Diploma in Community Geriatrics (PDCG)

The qualification is conferred by the University of Hong Kong through its Faculty of Medicine. I was the external examiner for the third such exam, following in the footsteps of Brian Williams who served in this capacity for the previous 2 years.

PDCG and GPs

As one might expect, the preparation, organisation and conduct of the exam were exemplary. What was of particular interest however, was the fact that the PDCG is mainly taken up by General Practitioners in Hong Kong, to enable them to deliver high quality community-based care for frail older patients living at home, or in residential homes or nursing homes. They have therefore put in place a robust system for developing General Practitioners with a special interest in geriatric medicine, based on a substantial qualification.

Part time course

The examination follows a ten month part-time course which involves private study, lectures, tutorials and clinical teaching, so the standard of the candidates taking the exam is understandably very high. The course is popular, with far more applicants than places, so this has led to a need for an expansion in the course capacity for next year.

The impetus for this course originated from the clear clinical need for good community geriatric care in Hong Kong and has been supported by a

collaborative arrangement involving the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Geriatric Society. The course content, teaching arrangements and candidate recruitment have been deliberately designed

to attract applicants across the interface between primary and secondary care, and also a mix from both public sector and private medical practice, thereby allowing a high degree of inclusiveness across the various styles of medical practice in Hong Kong.

The prime movers of this initiative are Dr Tak-kwan Kong, a senior geriatrician from the Princess Margaret Hospital (and a BGS member), who is currently the President of the Hong Kong Geriatric Society, and Dr Tai Pong Lam, an Associate Professor of Family Medicine in the medical faculty of the University of Hong Kong. My view is that our colleagues in Hong Kong have recognised the current and future needs for training in community geriatric medicine, both for General Practitioners and geriatricians, and have put in place a formal and powerful mechanism to prepare their doctors accordingly. There must be a lot that we can learn from their experience, and if anyone wishes to know more about the curriculum or examination they can contact me at stephen.allen@rbch-tr.swest.nhs.uk and I will put them in touch with the appropriate colleagues in Hong Kong.



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