

## Time for MJA Winter Awards again

Some of the awards the MJA will be offering in January will be the same as last year, but some will be new. *Philippa Pigache* provides the detail.

Unlike the MJA Summer Awards which are for specific media sectors, the Winter Awards reward some particular characteristic of good health or medical communications across media. There will again be awards for Investigative reporting/scoop – a key element in good news stories, and this year there will be two, one for consumer journalists, another for those working in specialist media. A single award for Medical science explained will cover all sectors. There will be an Interview award, and this year an award for a Column or opinion piece takes over from the Witty Article award run last year. Witty articles can still be entered but serious, provocative, well-argued features from a personal point of view also qualify.

We have moved the award for Excellence in journalistic skills, previously run in the summer, to the winter where we felt it fitted in better. It was introduced to replace Charity of the year, and is where journalists working in health education, public or press relations, producing material that is only rarely by-lined, can win acknowledgment of their unsung work.

And now for something different: we will offer an award for a Short medical science film. We have frequently rewarded radio and television news reporters, and last year we ran an award specifically for a radio or television documentary. We've also run awards for broadcast drama with a medical theme. This year we are trying to reach the

many capable film-makers producing short educational or promotional films that do not necessarily get aired on mainstream radio or TV. The broader entry criteria for this award doesn't exclude TV channels, of course. TV and radio programmes are also eligible to enter any of the other cross-media awards. Don't worry if you are unsure exactly who or what qualifies. More detail will be provided on the awards pages of the MJA website when it goes live later this month. Another new award, aimed this time at those labouring in the sadly-diminished regional press, is for a Local health campaign. And finally we are making an award for a Personal story. This could be either the journalist's own story, or one recorded on behalf of a third party (ghosted). Such accounts take the human interest story to a higher level and demonstrate an ability to step back and present subjective experience objectively. This makes a total of nine awards.

### More money

This winter, as last summer, individual award winners will receive a cheque for £750 plus an inscribed certificate, reflecting inflation and the continued generosity of our sponsors. Commended entries will receive inscribed certificates. We will be giving inscribed trophies, rather than cheques, for the Local health campaign and

the Short medical science film, because teams tend to be behind them rather than single journalists. We are in the process of recruiting judges and will let you know their names as they are signed up.

### Timetable

Entry forms and full details about how to send in entries will be posted on the MJA website – [mjauk.org](http://mjauk.org) – by October 28. The closing date for entries will be November 25. The awards will be presented at a ceremony on January 30, 2014 at a new location for the MJA, the Snow Room at the British Medical Association in Tavistock Square. So far, three sponsors are on board, Astellas, who joined us for the first time for the Summer Awards, Merck, Sharp & Dohme, Roche and new sponsor, Novo Nordisk. As others come on board we will inform you.

Awards are open to all. Non-MJA members pay a one-off entry fee of £25 to enter, or they can of course apply to join. So please spread the word among your friends and colleagues, especially among non-members.

The team organising the Winter Awards this year comprises Philippa Pigache, Rachel Vrettos, Simon Warne, David Payne, Caroline White and Ingrid Torjesen. All queries should be addressed to Philippa at [secretary@mjauk.org](mailto:secretary@mjauk.org).

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### MJA chair asserts authority at the AGM

The MJA AGM took place swiftly and uneventfully on September 25 at the Medical Society of London. Chair Victoria Lambert (right) enjoyed keeping order with the gavel on the dais at the Society. Following the AGM a new treasurer, Sarah Nuttall (left), a professional book-keeper who has been doing the MJA's books since August 2012, was elected. The good news was that the MJA accounts were healthily in credit at the end of January 2013. ♦



## NoticeBoard

### New members

**Maria Anguita** has rejoined the MJA after an absence while her children were small. She has worked in nursing and medical publishing since 2000 and is a former editor of the *British Journal of Nursing*, the *British Journal of Midwifery*, the *British Journal of Cardiac Nursing*, and *Nurse Prescribing*. She has also been associate publisher at Quay Books, an independent medical book publisher, and spent some time at the clinical features desk of *GP* newspaper. She has a degree in medical biochemistry, an MA in health journalism and a postgraduate diploma in the history of medicine. She currently works in the publications and communications department of the charity Tommy's (established by the maternity unit at St Thomas' Hospital), writing patient information material, and she freelances as a medical education writer and editor.

**Kat Arney** joined Cancer Research UK in 2004, after six years as a laboratory researcher. As part of the science communications team, she translates science-speak into plain English. She also writes for the charity's award-winning Science Update Blog, provides regular comment on the latest discoveries to the media and gives talks to staff and supporters. She is on the team that presents the successful BBC Radio 4 programme *Naked Scientists* and the Naked Genetics podcast. She has fronted the BBC Radio 4 programme *Costing the Earth* and two science documentaries – *Whatever Happened to the Chemistry Set?* and *Fighting the Power of Pink*. In her spare time she is a freelance science writer and harpist.

**Rosalind Dewar** is a freelance public relations consultant specialising in the health sector. She manages the media office for the Royal Society of Medicine and is retained as a PR consultant by the Association of Independent Specialist Medical Accountants. She is the co-founder of *GP Surgery.net*, a practice website service for GPs.

**Asha Fowells** is a freelance who draws on her experience as a community pharmacist to write for pharmacy trade magazines and to produce training materials for pharmacists and their staff. She spent eight years at *Chemist + Druggist* in a variety of roles including news reporter, clinical and continued professional development editor, and training development manager. She was shortlisted in the professional media freelance section of the 2013 MJA Summer Awards (see opposite page).

### More new members

**Linda Gummery** is a Geneva-based global communications consultant. For 18 years she was a journalist, initially as a reporter in Bristol for GWR and HTV before moving on to *Sky News* and ITN. She worked for four years on ITN's health and science desk. She now works with many of the world's major pharmaceutical companies as a consultant, trainer and adviser. She was a judge in the Multi-media journalist of the Year for this year's MJA Summer Awards and says she was impressed by the high standard of the entries.

**Janice Liverseidge** is marketing and communications director at the Royal Society of Medicine. She began her marketing career at the *Financial Times* and has also held positions in financial services and at the advertising agency Rapp, where clients included a number of major professional membership bodies and healthcare charities.

**Lalah-Simone Springer** is a reporter for *Nursing in Practice*, *Management in Practice* and *The Commissioning Review* – three journals which aim to represent the breadth of primary care. Before starting in this role in January 2013, she worked as a freelance runner for *Click*, the BBC World Service's flagship technology radio programme. In June 2012 she graduated with a BA in journalism from City University, London, where she specialised in health and technology reporting.

**Alison Wall** covers occupational health and safety for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). Previously she worked as an editor and writer for the British Institute of Learning Disabilities and Macmillan Cancer Support. Non-health journalism jobs include two years in New Zealand writing for architectural and interior design titles. Alison is also a qualified mindfulness teacher and teaches meditation to adults in Shropshire and Staffordshire.

### Old medical-pharmacy books in search of a home

Following a major de-cluttering exercise MJA member Adrienne de Mont is giving away some interesting old books. Some belonged to her father, who qualified as a pharmacist in the 1930s. *The Modern Home Doctor*, first published in 1935, is probably of most interest. Written for a lay readership, some of the advice would raise eye-brows these days. For example, that blood pressure can be caused by 'sagging bowels', or that the tendency of men around the age of 60 to pay undue attention to young women might be caused by 'congestion of the prostate' or 'related to the bladder'. A section on recommended clothing advises that to be well-dressed is to be inconspicuous, and that 'various freaks and vagaries of attire are quite unnecessary and usually a sign of exaggerated self-importance'. At the very least a member might be able to use this book as material for a humorous feature. For a full list of books available please contact Adrienne at – [adrienne.demont@btinternet.com](mailto:adrienne.demont@btinternet.com).

## MJA Summer Awards 2013



**Front row from left**, Asha Fowells, Ingrid Torjesen, Eleanor Bradford, Caroline White, Lalah-Simone Springer (red dress), Victoria Vaughan, Amy Brewerton, all three *Nursing in Practice*, Madlen Davies and Glenda Cooper

**Back row from left**, Laura Donnelly, Kathryn Bingham, Chris Smyth (behind), Victoria Macdonald, Jerome Burne, Richard Vize, Gareth Iacobucci, Jo Waters and Shaun Lintern

## WINNERS

**Publication of the Year**, *Nursing in Practice*

**Online innovation (formerly Website) of the Year**, NHS Choices (Kathryn Bingham)

**Multi-media journalist (formerly Broadcaster) of the Year**, Lawrence McGinty, *ITV News*

**Consumer staff journalist of the Year**, Laura Donnelly, *The Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*

**Consumer freelance journalist of the Year**, Jerome Burne

**Professional media staff journalist of the Year**, Dave West, *Health Service Journal*

**Professional media freelance of the Year**, Richard Vize

**Young journalist of the Year**, Madlen Davies, *Pulse*

**Story of the Year**, Max Pemberton

## COMMENDED

**Publication:** *Health Service Journal*, *Nursing Times*

**Online innovation:** [nursingtimes.net](http://nursingtimes.net), GP commissioning map on [hsj.com](http://hsj.com)

**Multi-media journalist:** Eleanor Bradford, BBC Scotland, Victoria Macdonald, Channel Four

**Consumer staff journalist:** Andrew Gregory, *Daily Mirror*, Chris Smyth, *The Times* (highly commended)

**Consumer freelance journalist:** Glenda Cooper, Jo Waters

**Professional media staff journalist:** Jaimie Kaffash, *Pulse*, Shaun Lintern, *Health Service Journal*

**Professional media freelance:** Asha Fowells, Ingrid Torjesen, Caroline White

**Young journalist of the year:** Kirsty Hough, commissioning GP, Dave West, *Health Service Journal*

**Story of the Year:** Gareth Iacobucci, *BMJ* (highly commended), Jaimie Kaffash, *Pulse*





## MJA AGM and debate and dinner

A. Bill (Dr William) Jackson and Joy Ogden

B. From left, Professor Stephenson (MJA chair Victoria Lambert out-of-shot to his left), Jon Danzig, Laura Swaffield and Deanna Wilson at the end of the table; Nonny Smith, Jill Palmer, MJA membership secretary Dawn Connolly and the hon sec (half obscured), and Maya Anaokar

C. Dr Richard Taylor shows MJA members a family heirloom: a brooch left him by a great-aunt who had received it from the then Duchess of Bedford after the First World War in tribute to her work as matron of the Duchess's hospital for servicemen at Woburn. He and his wife had taken it to show experts at the V&A Pearl Exhibition that afternoon. From left, Olivia Timbs, Jenny Bryan and Mike Smith

D. Maya Anaokar, retiring MJA vice-chair

E. From left, Jon Danzig, Joy Ogden and Mike Smith; behind them Markus McGill, Barbara Myers, Ashley McKimm and Geoff Watts; right foreground, Cherrill Hicks and Brandon Broll



Photographs on pages 1, 4, 5 and 6: Richenda Power



From left, Victoria Lambert makes a point, Bill Jackson ponders, and speakers Dr Richard Taylor and Professor Terence Stephenson listen with, between them, Branwen Jeffreys of the BBC, debate chair.



## AGM debates whether we have too many hospitals

**W**e all love local hospitals but would removing the specialist services from some 'one size fits all' hospitals to create centres of excellence be better for patients? At the end of the debate following the AGM in September, the proposition Hospitals: fewer are better was decisively carried by a vote of the 32 members present.

Nothing prompts outcries among health campaigners more than the prospect of hospital closures. Unpopular with patients, healthcare workers and politicians alike, mass protest demonstrations and marches are becoming a familiar sight as hospitals across the UK face mergers, downgrades and closures. But are downgrades the catastrophe they're often perceived to be? Or is opposition to changing hospital services irrational and grounded in political expediency?

A reorganisation of hospitals towards fewer, bigger and more specialised units would be not only financially prudent, but also in the best interest of patients, said the proposer of the motion, Professor Terence Stephenson, chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

**Patients need hospitals that give them the right treatment in the right place at the right time.**

*Professor Terence Stephenson*

Creating centres of excellence in London for stroke and trauma services has resulted in better outcomes for patients, and the approach should be extended to other acute medical services, he said. Bruce Keogh's recent review of 14 hospital trusts in England with excess mortality illustrated that almost all of these hospitals were very small.

'We have a fair, free and equal NHS but it's not first class. There's a gulf between the rhetoric and the reality,' said Professor Stephenson. It's a waste of NHS resources that so many hospitals, often only a few miles apart, provide the same services, he added. It's also bad for patient care: in the UK the death rate is some 12 per cent higher for emergency admissions

at weekends than on weekdays. He advocated hospital reorganisation to centralise expertise, even if it entailed hospital downgrades. 'People fear the loss of something rather than seeing the gains, but transformational change is what we need if we're to have an affordable NHS delivering safe care 24/7.'

**Drastic downgrading is wrong.**  
*Dr Richard Taylor*

Opposing the motion, Dr Richard Taylor, retired consultant, founder of the National Health Action Party and former independent MP (standing again in 2015), voiced disquiet about hospital services being merged. It would lead to a 'forgotten' group of patients with simple conditions who didn't need major services but could not be cared for at home.

'Obviously patients need to be treated in the right place and not every hospital can look after heart attacks, strokes and major trauma. But in addition to the beautiful, splendid, specialised centres, we need local hospital facilities for patients who can't cope,' he said.

Dr Taylor, who fought alongside others against the downgrade of Kidderminster Hospital more than a decade ago, said similar 'drastic downgrades', where a hospital lost its A&E department and inpatient beds, were wrong. 'As an MP I had complaints from people taken to Worcester from Kidderminster in the middle of the night, then having to take a taxi home with the fare being as much as £56. One couple was picked up by the police walking home along the M5!'

A better approach, said Dr Taylor, would be to have a real working partnership between smaller hospitals and their local 'bigger brother and sister', with medical and nursing staff rotating between the two. This system should be supported by a fully-functional 111 number to advise people on when it's appropriate to visit A&E, he added.

After spirited contributions from the floor, a sizeable minority of the MJA audience was still 'unsure' which side it was on, but the motion was nevertheless carried.

*Kathryn Bingham*

## Coming shortly...

### Minding your Ps and Qs: making sense of scientific research – October 23

**I**n 2007, MJA member Susan Mayor (PhD, former researcher and now medical journalist, below), spoke about understanding research papers, and there was a widespread demand that she give us more. This has now been organised for Wednesday, October 23 at the Medical Society of



London. (A formal notification will be going out by email so that you can sign up.) When is a P value significant and why does it matter when we are writing news stories about scientific research and clinical trials? Do we need to know what Q is? How confident are you in interpreting confidence intervals? And are we getting the full picture of clinical trials

if we look only at published data?

Susan Mayor will take us on a whistle-stop tour of the thinking that lies behind the design of clinical trials, and also provide us with some practical tips on how to interpret the results.

In addition, Tabitha Innocent, scientific liaison at Sense about Science (right) will discuss the work of the charity in helping people understand science and evidence. Using recent examples of sorting the hype from the hope, she will explain some of the questions you can ask about evidence to help distinguish the beneficial from the bogus.



### Social media can boost your career – November 26

**S**ocial media are the preferred way of keeping up with friends and fans these days, but they can also be useful tools for journalists looking for work. A meeting on November 26 features two experts who will explain how to exploit social networking forums to your professional advantage.



Mark Williams (above) impressed MJA committee member David Payne, editor of *bmj.com*, who then recruited him to talk to the MJA. Mark, known as Mr LinkedIn, claims he can persuade even the most cynical of people to try out the site as an effective business development tool. It currently has a worldwide membership approaching a quarter of a million users, and growth rates of more than two new members every second, and has evolved from 'a job board with social interaction' to become a mainstream networking tool for UK business professionals. Asking pertinent questions like 'Why is it important to have an impressive LinkedIn profile? Can I win new

commissions on LinkedIn?', Mark will demonstrate how to use LinkedIn to develop closer networks and wider 'weak links', and how to create an online presence which is dynamic, authentic and has real impact. Hopefully we will all go away and earn more money via LinkedIn.



Former BBC journalist Nick Booth (above) of *podnosh* ('social media surgeries – they're hands on; they're fun') calls his talk *Stock pots of social capital*. He writes: 'How do you build useful relationships online and what do you do with them?' Nick has been working on this problem since 2005 and has taught himself how to switch from a broadcast mindset to one where content is secondary and trust has to come first. In his interactive session he will provide examples of different approaches, imparting some of his underlying philosophy along the way, and will also answer members' questions on what to do to make the most of social media.



# MJA Christmas Quiz night at the Apothecaries' Hall

**M**JA chair, Victoria Lambert, thought it would be fun to have an MJA party. To make it even more fun we have found a great location – the Apothecaries' Hall in Blackfriars – and some action to test the little grey cells: a quiz night.

If you haven't been fortunate to dine at the Apothecaries' before prepare to tempt your taste-buds now. The food and wine are seriously superior. The location of one of London's oldest livery companies is impressive, too. The Worshipful Society of Apothecaries was founded



by Royal Charter in 1617. The Society plays a key role in the advancement of specialist areas of medicine, and in the ongoing postgraduate education and qualification of practitioners. The original home of the Society was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666 and the current building dates from 1672. It included the first 'Elaboratory' for the large-scale manufacture of drugs, which was located underneath the Great Hall.

If, like the editor, you don't quite know what is involved in a 'quiz night', all will be explained before you need to sign up. University Challenge it is not. Victoria writes: 'Competing quiz teams will be assembled in fours or fives. You can come as a singleton and join one of the MJA All-Stars sides, or prove your journal/channel is superior to all the rest by assembling your home team with colleagues... Will the winning team be from the MJA executive committee, or could the victors emerge from an *HSJ*, *BMJ*, *GP*, *Pulse*, *BBC* or *Nursing Standard* team? There will be prizes.'

More details to follow. ◆

## For he's a jolly good fellow

Media doc, current vice-chair of the Patients' Association and long-term MJA member, Mike Smith has been made a fellow of the Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Health. Mike's sexual and reproductive career, so to speak, began in the late '60s, when he first worked a couple of evenings a week for the Family Planning Association, now known as the FPA or fpa. In 1971 he became its chief medical officer, running a network of 1,000 contraceptive clinics. At the time contraception was not routinely taught to either medical students or postgraduates, nor was a contraceptive advice service available under the NHS, although the FPA ran training courses and issued certificates of competence which qualified the recipient doctor to work in its clinics. Then, in 1974, contraception became free to everyone as part of the health service and these clinics were handed over to the NHS. That year also Mike was involved in the setting-up of the National Association of Family Planning Doctors



(NAFPD), although it was nearly 20 years before the Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Health became part of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). It is now celebrating the 20th anniversary of this event.

'In spite of my being the Faculty's first in-vitro fertiliser, they forgot all about me for more than two decades,' says Mike, who was presented with his fellowship by Dr Chris Wilkinson, president of the Faculty, at the RCOG this June. (See above.) ◆

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