Board of science chair’s message

Welcome to the winter 2015 edition of the friends of the board of science bulletin, which provides an overview of the work we have been doing on alcohol and pregnancy and addiction to prescribed drugs, as well as details of our annual research grants awards ceremony at BMA House. We are continuing to build on the reports and briefings that were published earlier in the year and have a number of ongoing work streams that you can also read more about below.

If you would like more information about our work or to get involved, please email me by clicking here.

Professor Sheila the Baroness Hollins

Alcohol and pregnancy

In January 2016 the board will be publishing an update to its 2007 report, Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders: a guide for healthcare professionals. The updated report retains a strong focus on the responsibilities of healthcare professionals and the wider medical community in managing and reducing the incidence of these disorders, but has also adopted a wider focus on alcohol consumption during pregnancy, including consideration of the broader social context of the nation’s relationship with alcohol.

Prescribed drugs

In October 2015, the board published an analysis report designed to provide a platform for action to improve the prevention, identification and management of dependence and withdrawal associated with prescribed drugs. This brings together information and views from a range of key stakeholders. You can read the report, here. We are planning to host a stakeholder roundtable meeting early in the New Year to provide the opportunity to discuss collaborative action on this important public health issue.

Obesity

Following the publication of the board’s report Food for thought: promoting healthy diets among children and young people in July 2015, we have continued to work on this issue, including giving evidence in Parliament to the APPG on school food and to the Health Select Committee. The committee has published its report from the inquiry, which can be read here.

In October 2015, Public Health England published its evidence review of a range of measures to reduce sugar consumption. This supported a wide-range of the measures included in Food for thought.

Research grants on offer...

Following the annual awards ceremony, the 2016 BMA research grants application process will be opening shortly. Each year, the BMA awards ten research grants totalling around £500,000 to fund medical research. You can find out more about the grants on offer in 2016 here. Applications are now open and the closing deadline is 07 March 2016.

Work streams

The board is currently taking forward work across on a number of different policy areas including pain relief and analgesic use, austerity and health, the health needs of homeless people, growing older in the UK, and elderly drivers with dementia. To find out more about current work streams, please email the board here.
2015 BMA research grants awards ceremony

Each year the BMA hosts an annual award ceremony to celebrate the success of the annual research grant winners. The awards ceremony brings together philanthropists, key members of the medical research community, parliamentarians and key personnel within the BMA.

The 2015 BMA research grants awards ceremony recently took place at BMA House with guests attending a black-tie dinner and prize giving ceremony with a keynote address from BBC News journalist Kate Adie OBE.

You can read more about the research grants awards ceremony here and view further pictures from the evening here.

For further information about the BMA research grants, email the team by clicking here.