**Report to the ARM**

**Professor Rajat Gupta**

**Co-Chair Medical Academic Staff Committee**

It has been an honour to serve as Co-Chair of the Medical Academic Staff Committee (MASC) with Mary Anne Burrow for the past year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll on all of us. It has, however, highlighted the importance of academic medicine. Without the tireless efforts of academics, it would not have been possible to develop a greater understanding of coronavirus and its clinical manifestations. In addition, we would not have been able to develop an evidence base for effective treatments or develop effective vaccines, particularly as quickly as we did. Medical Academics are now at the forefront of developing a better understanding of the nature and impact of Long Covid and its management options.

The pandemic has unfortunately had a significant impact on non-COVID-19 related research activities which understandably have been postponed. Medical Academics, including trainees, have taken on or increased clinical roles and responsibilities. The delivery of undergraduate and postgraduate medical education and training has transformed almost overnight. Medical Academics, like clinical colleagues and other healthcare workers, are exhausted.

There have been numerous, often at least weekly, BMA meetings addressing COVID-19 related issues and MASC has been integral in helping shape BMA opinion on these matters.

Alongside COVID-19 related activities, MASC has continued to work, often with other branches of practice, on the resolutions passed at last year’s Conference of Medical Academic Representatives (COMAR) and other matters important to our members. These include highlighting and tackling issues in undergraduate medical education, the wellbeing of medical students and trainees due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and reducing numbers of medical and clinical academics when medical student numbers are increasing. We have highlighted the inequality and differential attainment that exists in academic medicine and in this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the excellent “Role Models” document from the Women in Academic Medicine (WAM) group. We have also requested equality and diversity data from various academic institutions. We are looking at why there appears to be less representation of doctors from a BAME background successfully applying for PhDs.

We are exploring the impact of reduced research activity and experience of Medical Academic trainees due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how this should be addressed. Other important issues for Medical Academics have been accessing clinical excellence awards and proposed cuts to the defined benefits of the Universities Superannuation Scheme pension. In addition, we have been assisting individual members of the wider academic community with any professional and employment difficulties.

The work of MASC is truly a team effort and we are fortunate to have a great team. Mary Anne and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the MASC executive team and members for their continued support. We would also like to thank representatives from other sub-committees and groups including the Joint Academic Trainees Sub-Committee, the Patient Liaison Group, the Women in Academic Medicine Group and of course COMAR for their counsel. We are grateful to the BMA officers and other branches of practice for their guidance and support. Most importantly, it would be remiss of us if we did not express our gratitude to David Cloke and other members of the BMA secretariat. Without them, we would not have been in a position to fulfil our duties.

**Rajat Gupta 19/08/2021**