Message from the chair

SAS Doctor Dr Anand Ganesan on winning a Wales Deanery BEST Award for Innovation in Education

Reflections from a SAS Doctor...

WSASC on the web
Hi Colleagues,

I’m very pleased to address you all again, as the chair of WSASC. I have been elected by WSASC members again this year and will be with you all for the next three years.

I am concerned that the Committee has a high number of vacancies at the moment. If you would like to get involved in the work of WSASC and represent your colleagues, approach the Medical Staff Committee Chair in your Health Board and let them know about your interest. They will undertake an election then to ensure that the Health Board is represented on the Committee.

Through the Reference Group meetings with the employers and Welsh Government, we are working towards getting all your activities to be coded to you rather than your colleagues. Please approach your local LNC members if you have difficulty in coding your clinical activities.

I would like to make you aware of a new publication from Royal College of Surgeons entitled ‘Quality indicators for job plans for SAS surgeons’. This is a very good and helpful document for all the SAS doctors working in 10 surgical specialties. You can download the document here: https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/publications/docs/quality-indicators-for-job-plans-for-sas-surgeons. The document explains the procedures which you should be allowed to do with full autonomy. It also clearly states that if you are in Threshold 2 and above, your job plan should mirror that of a consultant. It also explains about the support and time needed for your personal development as well during your development years. This document alongside the BMA’s job planning guidance available here http://bma.org.uk/practical-support-at-work/contracts/job-planning/job-planning-sas-doctors, should allow SAS doctors to feel more prepared when going into job planning meetings. I am writing to other Royal Colleges to encourage them to produce a similar document.

As a Senior SAS Doctor I feel that there is a lack of SAS Doctors in managerial posts such as Clinical Director/Medical Director. Whenever we raise this question with employers and Welsh Government, the answer is that SAS doctors are eligible to apply for management roles, subject to them having the appropriate skills and experience. So if you are interested and have the required experience and qualifications, you should apply for these jobs. Also it may be helpful for you to find a mentor who can lead you towards these posts.

I am also pleased to say there are many SAS Doctors who are now undertaking appraisals of colleagues, including those who are senior. This is encouraging and there have been many positive comments about the good job being done by SAS doctors as appraisers.

You will be aware of the difficult time the junior doctors are going through in England. Thankfully, the Welsh Government has opted out of implementing the new contract. We will continue to monitor developments on this and the impact its likely to have on SAS doctors in Wales.

All the best,
Ram Kumar
SAS Doctor Dr Anand Ganesan on winning a Wales Deanery BEST Award for Innovation in Education

“Simple ideas pursued with Commitment, Enthusiasm and Professionalism leads to Innovation, attitudinal change and better performers. It improves patient care and ultimately the NHS”

I am Dr Anand Ganesan, SAS (Staff & Associate Specialist) doctor working in Hywel Dda Health Board since 2009. In my clinical role as a Psychiatrist, I work in Adult Mental Health providing input to both acute and community settings. I am also the Secondary Care Medical Appraisal Lead for Mental Health, supporting doctors and overseeing the engagement in appraisal process. I am actively involved in Medical Appraisal Quality Assurance. I hold an Honorary teaching role with Cardiff University and I enjoy my educational roles which include teaching medical students at undergraduate level and supervising core speciality and GP Trainees at postgraduate level. I also provide mentoring and support to SAS colleagues in my role as SAS Lead for Mental health. I represent SAS doctors at the Directorate level, at the Health Board level and also at the National level.

I am delighted to have won the Wales Deanery BEST Awards 2014 (Best Educational Supervisor, Trainer and Best Staff & Associate Specialist Awards) under the Category Best Staff & Associate Specialist, Innovation in Education. It is prestigious award, recognising excellence in postgraduate medical and dental education in Wales, a proud and inspiring moment in my career. I was honoured with an invitation to attend the Awards ceremony, in April 2015 in the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Cardiff. The ceremony organised by BMA & Wales Deanery in itself was a fantastic experience and provided an opportunity to meet some inspirational teachers and leaders. I take this opportunity to thank The Wales Deanery for organising the Award, to recognise and celebrate achievements. I am grateful to my organisation Hywel Dda University Health Board for providing the environment to excel. I sincerely thank my friends, family and colleagues for their support.

The essence of winning the Award stems from my reflections on the medical appraisal system. I visualise appraisal as not only a professional development but also a performance enhancement tool. I draw inspirations from my various roles and innovatively apply the skills and expertise to add value to the appraisal process. I firmly believe success is a process and not a destination. I aspire to draw inspiration from this award and work for future achievements. I would be absolutely thrilled if you reading this today and have the inspiration and passion to excel, no matter whatever field you are in. I have no doubt that attributes of excellence are within all of us and it takes simple attitudinal changes to make them manifest.

I wish you all the best!
Reflections from a SAS Doctor...

On an August morning in 1978 when I joined the Obstetrics & Gynaecology department at Singleton Hospital, Swansea as a Locum SHO, I could never have imagined that I would end my full time working career here in Swansea almost 37 years later. Travelling down memory lane I have seen some profound changes. Some are good and some are not so good. Throughout my time the NHS has changed and grown tremendously. The departments have grown bigger and bigger, so have the hospitals, with many more consultants and other doctors and staff serving the NHS.

I became a Staff Grade doctor and finally an Associate Specialist some time ago, and became part of what is now known as SAS doctors, the workhorse of the NHS. When I first joined, the hospital administration was headed by a Hospital Secretary and a deputy Hospital Secretary, now there are managers everywhere. This is one of the biggest changes I have seen in the NHS, which in my opinion, is not always good.

I feel that the public need to realise that the NHS has limitations and has not got a bottomless pit of money to spend. Similarly politicians of all denominations should not make false promises. With all its shortcomings, the NHS remains a fantastic server for the people of Britain.

The Staff, Associate Specialist and Specialty (SAS) doctors, formerly known as Non Consultant Career Grade (NCCG) doctors, have increased in number over the years. As one of them, I have done my fair share of heavy work over the years with little fuss. To start with there was little or no recognition for us or our work. Though this is changing slowly, I don’t think the extent and value of our contribution is always fully recognised.

Even now our work goes under somebody else’s name. Continued hard work and dedication by many SAS doctors, with the support of some consultants and junior doctors with the support of the BMA changes are taking place, but I feel that a lot of work still needs to be done.

Due to certain changes, some of the SAS doctors are getting recognition in the form of becoming Associate Dean, Associate member on the Health Board, Clinical leads, Clinical supervisors, Clinical tutors, LNC lead, Chair of Medical staff Committee etc. This is to be welcomed.

I have been selected as the President of Wales Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society for this year. This is an honour to be selected as the first president from the SAS doctors. I would not have imagined this happening even in the recent past. Until about the mid-nineties this organisation was exclusively for the consultant Gynaecologists. No other doctor could have been its member. This is a nice change of culture, a step in the right direction.

I have now retired from my full time job and have come back as a semi-retired doctor doing two days of Colposcopy work which I love most. Hopefully I can continue to work for a great organisation like the NHS and serve the patients and the country the best way I can.

Dwijendra Baruah

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WSASC on the Web

Have you seen the new WSASC pages on the BMA website? If not, please take a look [www.bma.org.uk/wsasc](http://www.bma.org.uk/wsasc). If you are interested in getting involved in WSASC’s work, please contact one of the local representatives shown on the website or contact smiller@bma.org.uk