

The College of Medicine

service • science • healing

The College of Medicine is about bringing back the traditional values of service, commitment and compassion to healthcare. It's about developing knowledge and evidence that helps the patient instead of expecting the patient to fit the science. Above all, it's about putting the patient at the centre of everything health professionals do – making sure the art of healing is not lost in our target-driven, technologically sophisticated but sometimes callous world.

Health matters. Help us make it better

Something has gone wrong with healthcare. Doctors tell us medicine is in crisis while nurses say they are in despair. Despite the expertise and commitment of most health professionals, despite the good intentions of politicians, NHS managers and scientists, we are in danger of losing compassion and caring. It has been hard for those of us who have spent our working lives doing our best for patients – and seeing our colleagues do the same – to acknowledge that. But there have been too many public scandals, too many inquests, and too many grieving relatives telling us about the neglect and abuse experienced by their loved ones.

On top of that, we now have to deal with budget cuts that are bound to impact on patient care – at the same time as medicine is getting more and more costly with the development of new technologies and new drugs. We need a new compact between society and the health service, and between professionals, managers and patients, to solve problems like these.

It has to change

The College of Medicine is determined to make sure it does change. That is why we have created this new national institution that brings patients and doctors together with other clinicians, therapists and scientists. There can be no more powerful alliance to drive genuine progress and develop radical solutions.

Many of Britain's most distinguished health professionals and scientists support the College of Medicine. We complement but do not compete with the traditional Colleges and professional institutions. We provide a space where dedicated clinicians can collaborate with patients and experts in the biomedical sciences. Together, we are creating new initiatives that challenge how healthcare is managed and delivered, help the public look after their own health, and support frontline clinicians and therapists to do their best for each individual patient.

WHO'S WHO

Our 25-strong governing Council includes:

- ◆ Sir Graeme Catto, president
- ◆ Dr Michael Dixon
- ◆ Dr Harry Brünjes
- ◆ Professor Adrian Eddleston
- ◆ Baroness Finlay
- ◆ Professor Aidan Halligan
- ◆ Professor Stephen Holgate
- ◆ Dame Donna Kinnair
- ◆ Professor David Peters
- ◆ Professor Karol Sikora

Supporting them is our Advisory Council:

- ◆ Sir Cyril Chantler
- ◆ Sir Donald Irvine
- ◆ Professor John Cox
- ◆ plus leads from the Royal Colleges & professional bodies

Cancer survivor Professor Jane Plant chairs the Patients' Council

Science Advisory Council:

- ◆ Professor Simon Gibbons
- ◆ Professor Mustafa Djamgoz
- ◆ Professor Ajit Lalvani
- ◆ and more

Unique

With its unique structure, the College of Medicine is well placed to get to grips with leading change. Its 25-strong governing Council includes registered health professionals, patients and scientists – even a student and a therapist. Among the clinicians are some of the country's most distinguished doctors, several of them also medical scientists. The Advisory Council of eminent and distinguished professionals will make sure the College stays rooted in good science and good practice.

The governing Council is supported by a Patients' Council. It is chaired by Professor Jane Plant, who was told more than ten years ago that she had only two months to live but went on to beat her cancer. She is joined by a group of men and women who, between them, have experienced life changing illness, long term conditions and disability, as well as all the stresses of caring for a relative with mental illness and for children with serious progressive disease.

Like everyone else, our patients are not defined by their medical conditions. They bring with them professional experience and expertise in health service administration, biomedical sciences, voluntary sector management, journalism, business and the law.

Phytochemist Professor Simon Gibbons chairs the expert Science Council whose role is to inform, empower and support clinicians and their patients rather than dictate to them. Its focus will be evidence based medicine, founded on the biomedical and psychosocial sciences. Its science will be practical, applied and holistic, capable of exploring complex therapeutic and community interventions, establishing both clinical and cost effectiveness.

Action and priorities

Professor Andrew Miles, neuroscientist turned epistemologist and an expert in evidence based medicine, is leading one group from our Science Council that is working on ground-breaking academic research into what sort of evidence is needed to effectively support patient care. Others are collaborating with external organisations to bring together a database of information that would be relevant to patients as well as professionals.

If healthcare is to embrace service and healing as well as science then there are gaps in current education and training that the College needs to fill. The initial priority for our educationalists is the safe and high quality practice of integrated medicine, and ensuring the public has access to safe services from unregistered complementary practitioners. The College is developing two groups of courses. The first is aimed at registered professionals such as doctors, nurses and physiotherapists. It will familiarise them with different aspects of CAM and develop skills they can use in their day to day practice – not least techniques they can pass on to patients to help them manage their own conditions. The second group of courses is aimed at non-registered practitioners and will focus on developing their understanding of conventional medicine, including 'red flag' symptoms, familiarisation with conventional therapeutics and increased awareness of critical appraisal.

Meanwhile our Patients' Council is focusing on how health service managers can be held more accountable to the public they serve. It is also developing new materials that will help patients with long term conditions look after their own health and slow the progression of disease. And it is planning a series of events around the country that will encourage more people to get involved in their local services.

Find out more about the College of Medicine now.

The College will be launched in the autumn of 2010. To find out more, contact:

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