

FACULTY OF FORENSIC & LEGAL MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Physicians, London

Registered Address

11 St. Andrews Place
Regent's Park,
London NW1 4LE
Telephone 020 7935 1174
Textphone 020 7486 5687
Facsimile 020 7487 5218



Registered Charity No: 1119599

Registrar

Dr C George M Fernie
36 Donibristle Gardens
Dalgety Bay
Fife
KY11 9NQ
Telephone 01383823050
Facsimile 01383823050
E-mail cgmf@btinternet.com

Wednesday, 26 November 2008

Clare Settle
Chief Executive
Academy of Medical Royal Colleges
70 Wimpole Street
London
W1G 8AX

Dear Madam,

Re: Consultation on curriculum for training Medical Examiners of the Cause of Death

The Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine welcomes the opportunity to respond to the above consultation paper. The faculty was established in 2005 by the Royal College of Physicians of London and has been founded to achieve the following objectives:

- To promote for the public benefit the advancement of education and knowledge in the field of forensic and legal medicine.
- To develop and maintain for the public benefit the good practice of forensic and legal medicine by ensuring the highest professional standards of competence and ethical integrity.

The faculty currently includes three different professional groups:

- Forensic practitioners
- Medically qualified coroners
- Medico-legal advisers to the medical defence organisations

The Faculty has always been of the view that this new group of doctors would have a natural home in the Faculty where we would be able to facilitate the accreditation and revalidation processes that will be required for this subspecialty. We have actively participated in the development of this curriculum and already contributed to the detailed discussion that has taken place in its production.

In addition to work already done, the Faculty consulted its membership where the following specific comments were elicited –

1. This role may suit dually qualified doctors in medicine and law or full time forensic physicians where the person specification could be wider.

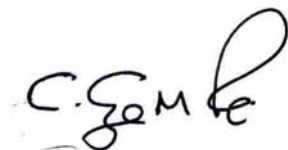
2. In this multi-cultural society, "Disposal of the dead" should include religious aspects e.g. the need for speed in burial of Jewish or Muslim patients, and the abhorrence of desecration of the body of Jewish patients.
3. It would be helpful to have some training in the use of ICD-10, OPCS /ONS coded all "death certificates" following the mortality rules in volume 2 of ICD. When coded the data forms part of UK statistics and is exchanged internationally as part of treaty obligations on the part of HMG to organisations like WHO. Correctly assigned entries into parts I,II and III of the medical certificate of the cause of death would help ONS and could be used as a measure of "quality"

The Faculty believes it is particularly important to be able to retain the extensive expertise of doctors within the areas from which we currently derive our membership. To that end, we would strongly commend that doctors should be able to undertake this work up to **five** years from retiral provided they have gone through revalidation in whatever manner is prescribed by the General Medical Council.

We would also point out that there are a number of well-qualified doctors, both in terms of experience and relevant postgraduate qualification, who would in the Faculty's view be eminently suitable to act as medical examiners but who may not have a CCT or be eligible for current appointment as NHS general medical practitioners. This issue will obviously be remedied once the Faculty has achieved sub-specialty or specialty status and a career structure in Forensic and Legal Medicine has come into being.

Finally, the Faculty wholeheartedly supports the development of this curriculum and intends to continue its involvement as the process further unfolds.

Yours faithfully,



DR C GEORGE M FERNIE
LLB, MBChB, MPhil, FFFLM, FRCGP, DFM