

## The Diary Project 2010

*“Thank you for reading my diary”,  
trainee diary 2010*

In August 2007 the College launched the first UK wide curriculum. The Curriculum is being implemented day by day by GP trainees, GP trainers, nurses and other staff members in general practice and at the hospitals. A large number of professionals are gaining experience with this curriculum and continuously building it in to their everyday lives as teachers, learners and practitioners.

Much has been written about the everyday life of GPs across the world, some in the format of biographies, but most is on the outcome of the work, the services, the costs, and on the theories and the values behind the work of a GP. Very little literature exists on how a GP curriculum influences the daily work for those involved in GP training.

This project was set up to know more about how GP training takes place, how the curriculum is used and incorporated in general practice and the other parts of the health care system.

Since March 2008, the RCGP Diary project has collected diaries during four weeks every year to allow direct user feedback to the Curriculum.

This is a short summary of the data from the Diary Project 2010, and a description of how the results are being used in the development of the GP Curriculum.

### The 2010 diaries

Between March 29<sup>th</sup> to May 9<sup>th</sup> 2010 anyone who works with the GP curriculum was invited to describe a day working within the RCGP Curriculum, including trainers, trainees, general practice surgery staff, educational supervisors, clinical supervisors and programme directors.

We invited participation in The Diary Project via the NAPCE, UKCEA and UKAPD websites, RCGP website, RCGP e-Bulletin, ePortfolio, AiT Newsletter, Seven Days and a reminder email to all AiTs midway through the Project. An email was sent to all deanery directors asking for their support of the project.

A total of 77 responses were received. 58 responses were received from trainees; 16 responses from trainers, and three responses from individuals involved in GP training in other capacities. This was fewer entries than in 2008 and 2009, but the depth and quality of the diaries entries have increased over the three years.

### What the diaries have described

The Diaries have given snapshots of training in general practice, and with this reflected the progress of implementation of the Curriculum.

In 2008 the diaries mainly described training days and how to use the documents and other tools of **a new Curriculum**. In 2009 the focus had shifted towards giving descriptions of clinical days working with the tools and assessments of **the Curriculum**; and in 2010 the tools and the documents seemed to be taken for granted leaving the reflections to focus on **the interaction between training, the clinical work, and personal lives**.

The emphasis in the 2010 diaries was all on training, not single entry commented on documents or tools. For all 2010 entries only a few described challenging e-portfolio situations or assessment

problems. The general issue was that training is appreciated by both trainees and trainers, influencing their personal lives as well as their professional lives. Training was described as an integrated part of the working day, sometimes stretching into evening hours at home mainly to catch up with e-portfolio work. The question of training length and content came up several times. The understanding of the Diary project as a possibility to feedback on the Curriculum was also expressed in several of the diaries.

From an educational point of view this is a very exciting development, understanding that the Curriculum is dynamic; and moving the attention of training from tools and documents, to the integration of training into the clinical and personal everyday lives of GP trainers and trainees.

*“Being involved in training allows me to have more protected time at work, but less family time at home. .... All good stuff though. I must enjoy it really (trainer diary 2010)”*

*“I love this place - it really works. It is a good thing that [my patient] is here. She is being cared for in the way she wanted by the most caring and conscientious nurses, and so are her family. I walk past her room to go home, and silently say goodbye. I'll be extra nice to my husband and daughter tonight.” (trainee in hospital post, diary 2010)*

### **What the diaries contribute to**

Since the first diary entries in 2008 the RCGP has used the insight to improve the support for users of the Curriculum documents and e-portfolio. The 2008 and 2009 entries made it clear that the learning taking place was assessment driven, and not driven by the description of ‘Being a GP’, the Core Curriculum. We realised that the ethos of the Curriculum had not been communicated well enough, and that there was a need for further support to the training undertaken in the secondary care settings.

The 2010 entries made it clear that trainees and trainers were reflecting on and engaging in how to improve the role of being a professional, working in a wider professional environment and balancing the professional and personal life of a doctor. As a consequence of the diaries, the next version of the Curriculum will also include learning objectives emphasizing the GP’s professional role, and the cooperation in the wider environment. In cooperation with the deaneries and the organisations for the GP educators we have started and supported educational initiatives to meet the challenges described in the diaries and the other kinds of feedback received over the last three years. One example is the collection of descriptions on how the deaneries deliver GP education in the secondary care training; another example is the development of the web based RCGP Medical Educators Group open for all interested medical education in general practice.

One of the most important consequences of the feedback we have received through the diaries is that the Curriculum is undergoing a major 2010-2012 revision to clarify the educational structure and intentions of the Curriculum, and thereby making it easier to work with.

Being archived at the RCGP, the Diary project also gives the RCGP the unique possibility to contribute to the contemporary history of GP training in the UK as told by the ones who are in the middle of it.

On behalf of the RCGP I can only reply; **“It is us, thanking you, for writing all the diaries!”**

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