

MCFD-RCGP international course for teachers of general practice 2004

Dr Mario R SAMMUT

Following Malta's accession to the European Union on 1st May 2004, EU Directive 93/16 obliges the introduction of Specialist Vocational Training in Family Medicine in Malta.

As a member of the Specialist Accreditation Committee within the Ministry of Health, the Malta College of Family Doctors (MCFD) is responsible for the development of a Specialist Training Programme in Family Medicine for Malta. In anticipation of the set up of this programme, the MCFD, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), in 2004 organised another 'International Course for Teachers of General Practice' (following that held in 2002-3) to train more teachers to provide this programme.

The Course

An **introductory module** was held on 24 April 2004 at the Forum Hotel, St Andrew's. This was tutored and organised by Dr Doreen Cassar and Dr Mario R Sammut, with the support of Dr Philip Sciortino and Dr Pierre Mallia, all of whom had completed previous Teachers' Courses.

During this orientation one-day workshop, participants were introduced to educational concepts (learning requisites and styles) and reflective practice. As an assignment for the next module, they were asked to complete a reflective diary on how they felt and responded to the orientation day.

The **second and third modules** of the course took place on the 17-21 May 2004 at the Forum Hotel, St Andrew's, and on the 18-22 October 2004 at the Dolmen Resort Hotel, Qawra. Both modules were tutored by Prof Roslynnne Freeman and Dr Marek Jezierski from the RCGP, co-tutored and organised by Dr Doreen Cassar and Dr Mario R Sammut, and supported by Dr Philip Sciortino and Dr Pierre Mallia.

The **second module**, after briefly revisiting the educational concepts introduced in the introductory workshop, then went on to tackle learning cycles, one to one teaching, small group teaching, and formative and summative assessment. Reflective practice was encouraged by holding reflective groups to close each day's work.

Assignments were set for the third module as follows: the design of a curriculum for the GP training year; the preparation of a 10-minute teaching presentation; the recording of a video consultation; the preparation of a 5-minute presentation on something read that prompted further thought and reflection; and the holding of large and small group meetings. In fact 4 large group meetings were held on a monthly basis, while students also met in small groups.

The **third module** then consisted mainly of the presentation of the various assignments, on which constructive



Figure 1: Dr Marek Jezierski (standing) in full flow during a group session



Figure 2: Dr Doreen Cassar (left) and Prof Roslynnne Freeman in deep discussion

feedback was given (with various methods being modelled). Moreover, information was presented on managing the consultation and different consultation models, together with small group teaching and leadership. However, the highlight of this final module was an afternoon of tutorials with medical students where each participant had the chance to experience one-to-one counselling with a student.

The Participants

At the end of the third module, MCFD President Dr Pierre Mallia presented a **certificate of successful completion** to the 14 participants: Dr Jurgen Abela, Dr Diana Balzan, Dr Jason J Bonnici, Dr Ron Borg, Dr Anton Bugeja, Dr Noel Caruana, Dr Saviour Cilia, Dr Josianne Cutajar, Dr Patricia De Gabriele, Dr Alessandra Falzon Camilleri, Dr Mark Rosso, Dr Daniel Sammut, Dr Zaid Teebi and Dr Andrew P Zammit.

Follow-up

In order to enhance the **further development** of teaching skills, knowledge and attitudes, participants of both MCFD Teachers' Courses were advised to participate in Continuing Professional Development activities. These include video-analysis of consultations in small groups and the preparation in pairs of a ten-minute presentation on a subject related to GP training based on a piece of art (poem, writing, painting, music, etc). There will also be the opportunity for participants to be involved in the development of the MCFD's Specialist Training Programme in Family Medicine.

A formal decision has yet to be taken regarding any further training modules for participants of both Teachers' Courses held by the MCFD. These could include a **fourth module** on mentoring and appraisal and, after participants would have started active teaching, a **booster module**.



Figure 3: A commemorative group photo, taken at the end of the course, of the participants with the tutors Prof. Roslynn Freeman (back row, fifth from right) and Dr Marek Jezierski (front row, fourth from right) and the co-tutors Dr Doreen Cassar (front row, third from left) and Dr Mario R Sammut (back row, second from left)

Dr Mario R SAMMUT MD MSc DipHSc

Family Doctor

Secretary for Education, Malta College of Family Doctors

Assistant Lecturer in Family Medicine, University of Malta

Email: mrsammut@rocketmail.com