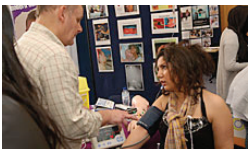


Scientists and Healthcare Professionals showcasing exciting careers in science



Chairman's report

After the drear dank days of a prolonged winter, the 18th March was a bright, warm and sunny spring day matched by the fresh, cheerful and smiling faces of students crowding into the Royal College's Education Centre for a conference devoted to the what, why, how and wherefore of science. These students were getting the opportunity of meeting real scientists and finding out what they do.

At 9 o'clock, the entrance was full of registering students picking up their delegate bags and information en route to taking their places in the Fleming and Jenner Rooms for the welcome address. The volunteer scientists had to squeeze past with their boxes of equipment and bags to set up their displays. This was our 7th annual conference and the first in this prestigious building. There was a real buzz of excitement and anticipation from the students and presenters. Throughout the day, the College rang with the sounds of laughter and honest endeavour, under the gaze of the portraits of the past presidents.

There were four exciting sessions.

Science

In which leading scientists discussed their work telling the students about science in the future, the latest developments in tissue repair and engineering, and all you need to know about viruses. These highly entertaining and informative lectures were well received by the students. Professor Averil McDonald described a magical future world capitalising on scientific discovery to improve quality of life. Professor Robert Brown told the students about Biomimetic Engineering of body parts to remove the reliance on donor organs for transplantation. Professor John Oxford challenged the students to consider if we could live in a world without viruses and told them about the prospects for new antiviral drugs and vaccines. Dr Mark Atkins continued the virus theme discussing pandemics and epidemics.

What is Science?

A session with the choice of two workshops. One facilitated by leading Healthcare Scientists challenging the students to consider what is science, what do scientists do, why do they do it, what makes someone a scientist and who are scientists. The second was Café Scientifique, presented by a team from the Association of Clinical Biochemistry, Institute of Biomedical Science and the Royal College of Pathologists about Point of Care Testing and how to ensure that the patient gets the right result. The students participated enthusiastically and came up with many innovative, unusual and novel ideas.

Interactive Science

A series of hands-on interactive displays showcasing what healthcare scientists do and giving the students a chance to meet the scientists, discover what they do and why, as well as trying some of the tasks for themselves. In this informal and fun session, the students were able to see the practical application of what they have been learning in the school classroom. The activities ranged from blood transfusion, microbiology, transplantation, resuscitation, physiotherapy, perfusion, immunology, histology, haematology, audiology, cardiology, andrology, pharmacy and much more. There were lots of opportunities to win prizes for taking part and from quizzes to show what they had learnt. The students surprised the presenters by asking lots of searching questions, including what they enjoyed about their jobs and what qualifications were needed.



Discovering Science

A workshop consisting of two activities. The students were asked to find the hidden science in everyday objects such as the cardboard coffee mug and the biro pen, and then to apply scientific investigation to discover the contents of 6 mystery boxes. This proved to be very popular enthralling the students from start to finish. The workshop was brought to a close by considering the approach of the students and how this fitted with The Scientific Method.



Over 200, years 10 to 13, students and their teachers took part. They were split into groups of about 50 per session. The workshops and interactive science presentations were repeated 4 times, but each was very different because of the involvement, enthusiasm and questions from the different groups of students and the volunteer scientists. There was a conference quiz to keep the students occupied on arrival and during breaks. The answers are available on the conference website www.science4u.info along with reports from the students taking part in the Reporter Competition and photographs from the day. There were lots of things to collect and the students went home with bags full of pens, toys, sweets, rulers, pads, prizes and leaflets about careers and universities, including the Modernising Scientific Careers programme, and information about the new Diploma qualifications.



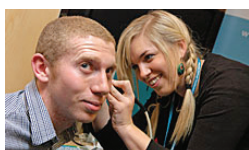
Feedback has been very positive. One teacher wrote *"I just wanted to say a great big thank you as we had a fantastic day yesterday, the feedback from the students was very positive they all found it both educational and fun. I was so glad I was able to make it as it really was amazing. A big thank you to you and everyone involved and I can't wait until next year."* Many of the volunteer scientists have made similar comments. The Students', Teachers' and Volunteers' Evaluations have been universally positive about the content, organization and venue.



The Organizing Team and I are very grateful to all of our presenters for giving their time and for their inspirational displays, lectures and workshops. We are also indebted to the College and our many sponsors (listed on the programme and website). John Rogers, CEO from Skills for Health, one of our main sponsors, said *"Encouraging young people to take up Sciences whilst in school or college is a pre-requisite to developing well informed, well prepared modern healthcare scientists for tomorrow's workforce. Our Labour Market Intelligence tells us that the health sector is the biggest employer of scientists but – like the general population – they are an older workforce, so Skills for Health is very pleased to support employers in London in their efforts to promote a variety of science progression routes at all levels of the health career framework."*



This was the first time that the College had hosted this event and as a fellow of the College it was rewarding to see its Education Centre and meeting rooms filled by so many lively, excited students learning about and experiencing the healthcare sciences. Hopefully, some of these students will become the fellows of the future.



Don Henderson

Don Henderson
Founder & Chairman of the Organising Committee