

BAP Governance Panel Report 2008-09

1. *Executive summary*

1.1 The Council of the British Association for Psychopharmacology established a Governance panel in 2005 to oversee the proceedings of Council, with respect to due process, in furthering the objects of the Association.

1.2 Professor Lader drew up the initial report and chaired the group until AGM 2007. Professor Iversen assumed chairmanship at that time and has acted with Professor Everitt and Professor Deakin. Professor Everitt retired in July 2008 and Professor Charles Marsden agreed to join the panel. Professor Iversen will attend the 2009 AGM.

1.3 The Panel has been provided with many relevant documents, including agenda papers and Minutes of the Council Meetings during the year and has been in communication regarding the drafting of this report.

1.4 We are agreed that the framework developed by Professor Lader continues to be appropriate, highlighting as it did areas of Governance of concern to the membership that need regular scrutiny.

1.5 2011 will see the 25th Anniversary of the Journal of Psychopharmacology. We are pleased with the attainments of the Journal of Psychopharmacology and approve the independence of the Editor and his advisors. Special mention should be made of the contribution of Professor Nutt in taking the Journal forward and of the contributors to the Journal for the quality and impact of many of the papers now being published in the Journal. The impact of increasing the Journal from 8 to 12 volumes per year will need to be monitored.

1.6 The educational programmes are popular and of value to the membership. A wider role continues to be envisaged but for this to be taken forward Council will need to respond to the stated needs of the membership.

1.7 We note that Council continues to be aware of the efforts needed to ensure representation of all members of the BAP, whatever their level of training, expertise and interests and regardless of their non-clinical or clinical status. This is one area where concern continues to be expressed and vigilance is required.

1.8 We are impressed by the co-ordination between Council, its President and the Secretariat. We again note the devoted service of the Executive Officer, Mrs Susan Chandler, and of her assistant, Mrs Lynne Harmer, in furthering the aims and activities of the Association. The BAP is exceedingly fortunate in having had the services of Mrs Chandler for so many years. We welcome to the office Dr Katie Hewitt who has been very actively engaged in promoting the pre-clinical course.

1.9 We conclude that the conduct of the BAP conforms to appropriate standards of Governance and that in 2007-2008 no new areas of concern have emerged.

2. *Background (adapted from reports for 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 and reported for the benefit of new members)*

2.1 The Council of the British Association for Psychopharmacology established a voluntary Governance Panel of three members. We have been asked to oversee Council proceedings and provide reassurance to the membership that all of Council's business is conducted properly.

2.2 For new members joining the BAP in recent years it may be helpful to rehearse the terms of reference of the Panel.

The purpose of the Governance Panel is to assure members that:

- a) Council is acting effectively in achieving the objects of the Association.
- b) Council's decisions have been made with due process and in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Memorandum, Articles and Bye-laws of the Association. (Copies of the latest versions of these documents have been provided.)
- c) Council is providing members with value-for-money for their annual subscription.
- d) Council is promoting the professional interest of psychopharmacologists.

2.3 We have been further instructed that it is not our role to decide whether decisions taken by Council are right or wrong. The responsibility is to confirm that the decisions have been made with respect to due process. The Governance Panel is expected to provide a short written report which will be presented at the AGM. It has the absolute authority to decide on the topics to be included in the annual report.

2.4 Further to 1.2 a) above, the Articles of Association of the BAP, as drafted in June 2003 state that the objects of the Association are:

“To advance education and research in the science of psychopharmacology for the public benefit and to publish the results of such research and in furtherance of that object but not further or otherwise the Association shall have the following powers:

- a) To bring together all persons involved or interested in the scientific study of psychopharmacology by arranging scientific meetings, seminars and study groups for the purposes of promoting the practice of psychopharmacology, developing the subject matter and disseminating those developments for the benefit of the public.
- b) To provide guidance and information to the public on matters relevant to psychopharmacology as appropriate.”

3. *Documentation*

3.1 For the purposes of this report, we have noted the following documents:

- a) Council minutes for meetings held on 20 July 2008 (Harrogate), 13 October 2008 (London) and 17 March 2009 (London).
- b) List of BAP forthcoming activities for 2008-2009.
- c) The content of these meetings and training courses.
- d) Details of the 2009 Annual Meeting to be held in Oxford (26-29 July).
- e) Contents of Newsletters from October 2008, February 2009 and April 2009.

3.2 Professor Iversen attended the Council Meeting on 17 March 2009.

4. *The Activities of the British Association of Psychopharmacology and Business of Council 2008-2009*

4.1 The changes in Bye-laws made in 2007-2008 permitted the appointment of a Secretary for Pre-Clinical External Affairs. Dr Mohammed Shoaib was duly elected to this role and is energetically supporting the interests of pre-clinical training and of CPD for non-clinical members. This is a very positive development to ensure the representation of pre-clinical interests in the Association. Constant attention needs to be paid to their interests ensuring active membership and involvement of these scientists in the Associations.

4.2 The informed discussions at Council (17 March 2009) selecting symposium topics for the 2009 summer meeting again highlighted the pre-clinical/clinical divide in the Association. Efforts need to continue to ensure a balance of basic and clinical science in the chosen symposia akin to the range and quality seen at ACNP meetings.

4.3 Membership remains solid but the work described in 4.1 and 4.2 should encourage more pre-clinical members and a better balance between clinical and non-clinical members.

4.4 The Panel again welcomes the quality and range of CPD. The certified clinical courses are particularly well received. A lower take-up of BAP pre-clinical certificate is noted but the support for a new summer *in vivo* training course funded by the Association is a welcome development in the pre-clinical arena. A mentoring scheme will be launched at the 2009 summer meeting. Its functioning and value to the membership will need to be monitored carefully.

4.5 Active discussions with the RCPsych. relating to the delivery of CPD are noted. Despite interaction with the Psychopharmacology Special Interest Group of the RCPsych and the invitation of its chair to an *ex officio* membership of council, more collaboration, rather

than competition would be welcome. The BAP is in a strong position to be the pre-eminent provider of CPD in Psychopharmacology to clinicians.

4.6 External collaborations with other professional bodies are noted, including positive membership of the Bioscience Federation, now in the process of merging with the Institute of Biology. The newly formed body will provide a single and strong voice of biology of particular relevance and value to our pre-clinical members.

4.7 Communication with the public continues to have a high priority for the Association with the Science Media Centre providing a valuable resource and further work on the web-site being supported and funded.

4.8 The number of volumes of the Journal to be published annually is further increased from 8 to 12. The impact factor currently stands at 3.78 – an all time high. The effect of this expansion of pages needs to be monitored on impact factor and subscription levels. The Association will assume the increased cost for Members for one year.

4.9 There are reasons to be cautious about the financial future. Falls in membership numbers, attendance at the summer meeting, journal subscriptions and reprint sales impact the surplus the Association currently enjoys.

4.10 The investment policy on reserves should remain cautious at a 70% bonds, 30% stocks split.

4.11 A committee to review salaries of officers and administrative staff has been formed and its terms of reference agreed at the October Council.

5. *Overview*

5.1 We emphasise that constant care needs to be taken to ensure that all interests are represented within the BAP. Council has emphasised the convention by which presidents alternate between distinguished people with pre-clinical and clinical expertise. The membership of Council should also maintain this balance. We note that these aims are kept constantly in mind by Council.

Susan Iversen (Chairman) (term of office ends July 2010)

Barry Everitt (term of office ends 2009)

Bill Deakin (term of office ends 2010)

Charles Marsden (term of office ends 2011)