

BAP Governance Panel Report 2010-2011

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 the chair 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 and Professor Deakin retired in 2010. Professor Marsden assumed the chair in 2010 and two new members, Dr Clare Stanford and Professor Guy Goodwin, joined the Panel.
- 1.3 The Panel was provided with the 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 Publishing activity continues to flourish. From January 2010 the Journal of Psychopharmacology increased to 12 issues per year with a rejection rate of 60%. The Editorial Manager remains concerned about the backlog of papers and aims for a maximum six month delay on publication. Council has proceeded in collaboration with SAGE to launch a new journal, "Therapeutic Advances in Psychopharmacology".
- 1.6 Educational programmes remain a high priority of Council. In addition the Cheltenham and Bradford Science Festivals (2011) provide valuable opportunities to bring the work of BAP to public awareness. The BAP will be represented at the Cambridge science fair in 2012. Two new online educational resources have been made available and the public web pages initiative is progressing.
- 1.7 Council must continue 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 an area requiring continued vigilance particularly in light of the reduction in industrial neuroscience activity in the UK
- 1.8 The economic downturn is revealing some financial vulnerability of BAP. Reduction in Membership numbers, attendance at the Summer Meeting and industry support for consensus meetings and satellite meetings at the Annual meeting all give reasons for concern. Council has acted appropriately to ensure control of expenditure.
- 1.9 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. Dr Katie Hewitt was actively engaged in developing and promoting the pre-clinical and online CPD courses until March 2011 and her contribution was welcomed.
- 1.10 Council has considered and approved a formal procedure for the

- nomination and selection of awardees for the Lifetime Achievement Award
- 1.11 We conclude that the conduct of the BAP conforms to appropriate standards of Governance and that in 2010-2011 an area of concern was identified but that this concern has been carefully considered by Council.

2 *Background (modified from earlier reports for the benefit of new members)*

2.1 The Council of the British Association for Psychopharmacology established a voluntary Governance Panel of three members in 2005, the role of which is to oversee Council proceedings and provide reassurance to the membership that all of Council's business is conducted properly. The initial report was drawn up by Professor Malcolm Lader. In 2007 Professor Susan Iversen assumed the chair of the panel followed by Professor Charles Marsden in 2010.

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.

2.5 The Panel is agreed that the framework developed by Professor Lader in 2005 continues to be appropriate as its principal focus is on areas Governance of importance to the membership and the propriety of the processes used in the decision making of Council.

3. *Documentation*

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

- a) Council minutes for meetings held on 25 July 2010 (Harrogate), 27 October 2010 (London) and 16 March 2011 (London).
- b) List of BAP forthcoming activities for 2010-2011.
- c) The content of these meetings and details training courses.
- d) Minutes of the 2010 Annual Meeting held in Harrogate (26 July).
- e) Contents of Newsletters 2010-2011.
- f) Audited Accounts December 2010.

3.2 Professor Marsden attended the Council Meeting on 16 March 2011.

4 *The Activities of the British Association of Psychopharmacology and Business of Council 2010-2011*

4.1 2010-2011 has been a demanding year for the Council and Secretariat of the BAP with new initiatives coming to fruition combined with more stringent financial conditions for the Association due to the decline in industrial neuroscience in the UK and the rest of Europe.

4.2 Organisation:

The Panel noted the excellent working links between Council, The President and elected officers of the Association and the Secretariat in Cambridge. This co-ordination is essential for the effective organisation of the Association. The Panel again notes the dedicated service of the Executive Officer, Mrs Susan Chandler, and her assistant, Mrs Lynne Harmer, in furthering the aims and activities of the Association. The BAP benefits greatly from the long history and experience of the BAP that Susan Chandler brings to the Secretariat. Dr Katie Hewitt (Education Development and Delivery Co-ordinator) worked with the BAP until March 2011 and through her contribution to the development of the pre-clinical training modules and the online CPD modules made an important contribution to the educational aims of the BAP. The Panel note that a replacement appointment for Dr Hewitt will be made though with a modified job profile.

4.2 Council Attendance:

The Panel noted the high attendance record of Council members at Council meetings indicative of the active interest in and involvement with the Association. Council elections have been carried out in accordance with the BAP Constitution. We note that Council remains aware of the need to have appropriate balance of clinical to non-clinical representation.

4.3 Annual Summer Meeting:

The programme for the 2011 Annual Meeting in Harrogate continues to reflect the interests of both the pre-clinical and clinical members of the Association. The flexibility of the programme design has been demonstrated by the inclusion of new events (special sessions, plenary symposium and a 'poster trek'). Support for the meeting from the pharmaceutical industry has declined, in line with the reduction of pharmaceutical neuroscience activity and this resulted in a net loss on the 2010 Summer Meeting. The Panel notes the excellent efforts made by Council during the current year to obtain financial support from industry while also reducing the costs of the meeting in an appropriate manner without altering the scientific and clinical quality of the meeting.

4.4 Education and Training:

The clinical and pre-clinical certificate programmes, together with the Masterclasses, continue to be well received and supported. The Panel

commends the completion of the new online CPD initiatives (clinical CPD and InVivoStat) and look forward to following their progress in future years.

4.5 Prizes and Awards:

The Panel are pleased to note that Council has introduced detailed proposals that clarify and formalise the procedures involved in the nomination and selection of awardees of the Lifetime Achievement Award. This now ensures that there are formal procedures in place for the selection of all prizes and awards made by the BAP Council.

4.6 Membership:

This remains fairly stable with losses, mainly due to non payment of subscriptions and failure of training members to transfer to full membership, counteracted in part by new members (full and training). In October 2010 membership fell to 856 but had increased to 870 by March 2011. It will be important for the future of the BAP that membership is maintained at the current level despite the pressures to achieve this because of the decline in potential industrial membership.

4.7 External Affairs:

The Panel notes that this is an area of activity that has increased in the past few years with activities ranging from involvement in national debates in collaboration with other similar organisations (British Pharmacological Society and the British Neuroscience Association) about the future of industrial neuroscience to active participation in national/local science fairs (Cheltenham (2011), Bradford (2011) and Cambridge (2012)). The Panel supports these initiatives with the proviso that all external activities of the BAP are clearly representing the general psychopharmacological interests of the membership. The Panel welcomes the development of the Public web pages on the BAP site but register the comment that, in common with all such pages, it will be essential to ensure they remain factual sound, relevant and up to date.

The Panel welcomes continuing collaboration with other professional bodies both in terms of the organisation of joint symposia and at a national level in determining common responses to national issues of relevance to psychopharmacologists and the Panel is supportive of the role that the BAP will play in the Festival of Neuroscience in 2013.

4.8 Publications:

The Journal of Psychopharmacology continues to grow and provide financial support to the Association. There is however still a backlog of accepted but unpublished papers. Council has decided that the solution is not to publish more or bigger issues as this would be very expensive but to be more rigorous in the review process.

The first issue of Therapeutic Advances in Psychopharmacology has been published. The Panel note that there are a low number of submissions currently but the journal's inclusion in PubMed by the end of 2011 should have a positive effect on the submission rate.

4.9 Finances:

From the Annual Accounts the panel note that the BAP remains in a sound financial position despite the change in financial environment. As already mentioned steps are being taken to control expenditure associated with the summer meeting. The panel note that Council is careful not to assume that the cash flow from the Journal of Psychopharmacology will necessarily continue at the present level. The range of the activities referred to in the sections above all draw on resources, both people and money. The audited accounts restate the reserve policy to keep a minimum of two and a half years' expenditure in reserve.

5 Overview

5.1 As in previous years we emphasise that constant care needs to be taken to ensure that all interests are represented within the BAP and in the membership of Council. In this report particular note is taken of the financial challenges the BAP faces at present linked with the increased activity of the BAP in particular in association with external affairs.

Charles Marsden (Chair)

Clare Stanford

Guy Goodwin