



Association for  
Palliative Medicine  
Of Great Britain and Ireland

Trainees'  
**NEWS UPDATE**

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## APM Trainees' News

Dear Trainees,

Welcome to July edition of the APMT newsletter. This is the first newsletter for us as your new AMPT co-chairs and we would like to primarily take this opportunity to send our thanks and appreciation to our outgoing Chair, Dr Vanessa Jackson for her dedication to APMT and her work over the last year. Thank you, Vanessa.

2020 has been a disorientating year for many of us. We are aware that COVID-19 has had both variable and far reaching effects for trainees in both our work and social lives for several months now. In these times wellbeing is vital. Don't forget that there is still access to wellbeing apps which you can check out below. Also in the newsletter are summaries of recently published COVID-19 studies and the latest updates from our SAC meeting.

Other events this year have demonstrated the huge importance of celebrating diversity and standing up for equal opportunity. The Black Lives Matters movement has brought the issue of present injustices to the forefront. In recognition of this newsletter includes our reflection on these issues and a summary of the 2013 report of ethnicity-based disparities in access to Palliative Care. We hope this critical understanding of our current situation with give us all pause for thought and that together we can work on opening up access to palliative care universally regardless of background.

As always, we'd love to hear from you and welcome your contributions to the upcoming newsletters.

With regards,  
Jasmine and Simon  
APMT Co-Chairs 2020

## Wellbeing Apps

NHS Staff have been given free access to some wellbeing apps since March to the end of December 2020 to support their mental health and wellbeing following the onset of COVID-19. These include:

### Headspace

Headspace is a meditation app. It aims to teach mindfulness meditation skills for a few minutes each day to help positively impact mental and physical health.



### Unmind

Unmind is a workplace mental health platform aiming to help organisations and employees improve their mental wellbeing.



### App Access

To explore these apps and for more resources on wellbeing at work:

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/news/2020/03/free-access-to-wellbeing-apps-for-all-nhs-staff>

## Post of the Month – SAC Update

Over the last number of months, our lives, both personally and professionally, have been dominated by the presence of COVID-19. As life begins the journey back to 'normality' we felt it would be useful to have an update on training and how we move forward. The SAC was able to meet virtually on the 30th of June to discuss issues relating to Palliative Medicine training and here are some of the key messages.

### 1. COVID-19

**Digital platforms** – For many of us digital platforms have become part of our normal way of working, both for communication between colleagues and with patients and their families. Remote consultations are likely here to stay. The SAC acknowledge that when formulating virtual/remote training resources access variability amongst trainees to these platforms must be taken in to consideration remote consultations will be new to many of us and the RCGP have useful resources to support development of these which can be accessed here:

<https://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=10551#RCGP>

**Assessment** – The SAC acknowledges that owing to reductions in face to face patient contact the opportunities for direct observation by supervising consultants and completion of SLEs has reduced. The SAC is recommending that digital platforms may be considered to facilitate this going forward.

**Trainee Welfare** – The last few months have been a difficult time for all. Care and consideration must be paid to the health and well-being of all trainees but especially for those who have suffered a personal loss. A national list of resources will soon be available for those who would like to avail of support.

**Shielding trainees** – Consideration must be given to signposting and training access for this cohort of trainees. Along with those returning from a period of absence or out of programme, additional support must be provided to adjust to new working models. It is strongly advised that shielding trainees and those newly returning to work have individualised risk assessments conducted. 'Return to work' guidance from the JRCPTB can be accessed here:

<https://www.jrcptb.org.uk/documents/jrcptb-return-practice-guidelines>

**ARCP** – It is recognised that adjusted outcomes may need to remain until 2021.

### 2. Shape of Training

Due to the pandemic, the curriculum submission has now been delayed until 2021, however work continues to ensure a smooth transition, focusing on implementation models across the 4 nations. We are aware that transition between curriculums remains a source of anxiety for trainees but please be assured that flexible models are being explored with the GMC. More information will be available in due course.

### 3. Recruitment

Round 1 – 100% fill rate. Round 2 – planning to go ahead via virtual platforms.

We hope that everyone is continuing to enjoy a positive training experience and hope to bring you more information as the year progresses. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at any point.

Stay safe, Keep well,  
Gurpreet, Shaun and Amy (SAC trainee representatives)

**Gurpreet Gutpa** – Trainee representative for England – [gurpreet.gupta@nhs.net](mailto:gurpreet.gupta@nhs.net)

**Shaun Qureshi** – Trainee representative for Scotland – [Shaun.Qureshi@nhs.net](mailto:Shaun.Qureshi@nhs.net)

**Amy Ritchie** – Trainee representative for Wales and Northern Ireland – [amyritchie@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:amyritchie@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

## Palliative Care Formulary Access

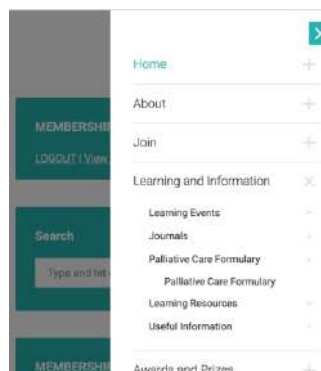
New to 2020, eligible APM members i.e. full members (including reduced subscription) now have access to Palliative Care Formulary Online through MedicinesComplete. Access is via the APM website by logging in and accessing PCF through the learning tab.



1. Login on to the APM website [apmonline.org](http://apmonline.org)



2. From the list icon (top right corner) select 'Palliative Care Formulary'



## COVID-19 Guidance

The APM has issued guidance regarding COVID-19 and Palliative, End of Life and Bereavement Care. The latest guidance can be found on the website: <https://apmonline.org/>



If there is anything else that you have found useful in preparing for the SCE, or for CPD in general, then please contact us and we will endeavour to add this to the next News Update.

## Meet the Trainees' Committee



### **Dr Maimoona Ali**

#### **- BMA Representative**

Hi, I am Maimoona and I'm the APM BMA representative. This post serves as a link between the BMA and APM Trainees' Committee where I link in with the APM Trainees' Committee to update and liaise about issues relevant to junior doctors in palliative medicine.

I am currently a ST4 trainee in Yorkshire and Humberside working as a hospital support registrar at the Northern General hospital in Sheffield.

Like all of us COVID-19 has changed the way we work and socialise. With some easing of lockdown restrictions I am looking forward to staycations and exploring parts of the UK!

## Black Lives Matter and Reflections in Palliative Care

The Black Lives Matter protests brought to the fore issues of inequality across our society, and unfortunately, we in palliative and end of life care are not immune. This 2013 Marie Curie report, authored by Natalia Calanzani, Jonathan Koffman, and Irene Higginson, is core reading to understand disparities in access to palliative care for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups in the UK.

The authors appraised evidence in relation to ethnicity and palliative care, drawing from the 2011 census and a wide range of published research. They found evidence of lower access to palliative care for BAME groups, and some evidence of poor communication practices, including lack of sensitivity to cultural/religious differences.

Recommendations from the evidence included staff training (e.g. communication skills and cultural competency), open communication (avoiding stereotypes), reaching out to BAME communities, sharing experiences of good practice and improving the capture of ethnicity data, however the authors noted that actual examples of good practice were much rarer than recommendations.

This report is now seven years old, and hopefully we've made progress since then. Now is a good time for us all to reflect on whether we are providing an example of good practice in our day to day work, or whether there is more we should do.

#### **The full report is available at this link:**

[https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/globalassets/media/documents/who-we-are/diversity-and-inclusion-research/palliative-care-bame\\_full-report.pdf](https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/globalassets/media/documents/who-we-are/diversity-and-inclusion-research/palliative-care-bame_full-report.pdf)

#### **A summary is available at this link:**

[https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/globalassets/media/documents/who-we-are/diversity-and-inclusion-research/palliative-care-bame\\_exec-summary.pdf](https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/globalassets/media/documents/who-we-are/diversity-and-inclusion-research/palliative-care-bame_exec-summary.pdf)

## Research and Journals

### Development of a palliative care toolkit for the COVID 19 Pandemic

Thomas J et al. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*. May 23 2020.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2020.05.021>

This article details the development of a palliative care resource for non-palliative care physicians in light of the COVID 19 pandemic. The tool kit includes online resources, mobile app, one-page guides, pockets cards and communications skills videos. It gives advice on symptom control as well as communication at the end of life and advanced care planning. The authors felt that this tool kit enabled better dissemination of palliative care advice to enable the specialist palliative care team to focus on the highest need consults.

### Response and role of palliative care during the COVID-19 pandemic: A national telephone survey of hospices in Italy

Constatini M et al. *Palliative Medicine*. April 2020

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0269216320920780>

This article looks at the impact of COVID 19 on hospices in Italy, to help inform the response of palliative care in other countries and going forward in the midst of the pandemic. It takes the form of a cross sectional phone survey, and examines high, medium and low prevalence hospices. It details changes in hospice policy and practice in response to the pandemic and concerns that were detailed due to the pandemic.

The authors recommend that the government is aware of the vital role of hospices and palliative care in the context of a pandemic and the importance of hospices acting flexibly and proactively, the importance of PPE and setting specific guidance.

### Resources for trainees interested in research

The APM Science Committee have produced the following to help trainees providing useful resources and an outline on how you might approach carrying out a research project: <https://apmonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Resources-for-Trainees-Wanting-to-Carry-Out-Research.pdf>

### Journals

The following journals can be accessed via your login through the APM website:

- Palliative Medicine Journal
- BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care Journal
- EAPC Journal (at a reduced subscription rate)

Publications may also be available through the BMA website, for those with membership. A list of these can be found at: <https://www.bma.org.uk/library/e-resources/e-journals>.

## Contact the APM Trainees' Committee

We always want to hear your feedback, so please do get in touch:

- Via your regional APM Trainees' Representative  
For a full list of regional representatives go to <http://apmonline.org/committees/trainees-committee/>
- Email us directly via [apmtraineescommittee@gmail.com](mailto:apmtraineescommittee@gmail.com)
- On our Facebook page 'APM Trainees'
- On Twitter @apm\_trainees



Joining the APM provides a host of benefits: if you are not already a member join today! <http://apmonline.org/join/>  
Please remember to upgrade your membership to 'full membership' on commencement of your first consultant post. This can be done by emailing the APM at [office@compleat-online.co.uk](mailto:office@compleat-online.co.uk)