



Annual Report of the Academic Secretary **Annual General Meeting, 8 June 2007**

The Association's National Academic Programme has progressed confidently over the last twelve months, asserting its strength as a valuable source of information and professional development for those working within child and adolescent mental health, and diversifying its activities to meet their continuing needs.

This time last year, I reported on an anticipated record turn-out for the Jack Tizard Conference on evidence-based practice in child and adolescent mental health. The day, attended by over 250 delegates and linked to the launch of the Association's 50th Anniversary, was truly memorable with inspirational presentations by justly great speakers. John Weisz, Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, Boston and President/CEO of Judge Baker Children's Centre, delivered the keynote lecture which provided a fascinating overview of the best-supported treatments emerging from a recent review of the evidence on anxiety, depression, ADHD, and conduct problems. His presentation and those of the other speakers, highlighted the strengths and limitations of the treatments available and the evidence base on which they rest. The success of the day was particularly encouraging as the aims of the conference closely reflected those of ACAMH's overall objectives.

A special conference was hosted in August to honour ACAMH's Anniversary Year. This event, focusing on learning disabilities, was very popular, providing much-needed updates and offering an insight to difficulties not just facing professionals but also service users. Whilst there are no immediate plans to hold an annual autumn conference, the Association is exploring the possibility of organizing a national event jointly with another complementary organization, to enhance skills and knowledge offered to delegates. This would build on the tremendous success of the joint conference held with the BABCP in March this year, which brought together the specialism and expertise of ACAMH and BABCP to present a varied programme on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with Children and Young People. This three-day conference re-awakened opportunities for the Association, both in terms of hosting multiple-day events as well as partnering a like-minded organization – very ambitious planning but so rewarding for all concerned, delegates and organizers alike. It was great to work with the BABCP and discussions are underway for a further joint initiative.

In 2007 the Association launched its Master Class Series, which takes the form of workshops covering the main child and adolescent mental health disorders for which evidence based interventions are available and which are aimed at ACAMH members who are qualified, experienced mental health practitioners. The March ADHD Master Class, led by Professor Eric Taylor was very successful, and we anticipate that the further two classes planned for 2007 on PTSD (Emeritus Professor Bill Yule) and OCD (Dr Isobel Heyman) will similarly attract many more delegates than there are places. Further classes will be rolled out during 2008 and 2009, focusing on Anxiety, Eating Disorders, Autism, CBT and Depression.

Two other initiatives were launched during 2007; firstly, the implementation of an Annual Visiting Fellowship to fund an eminent international speaker to present at a national level as well as to travel round and speak at branch events, and secondly, an overseas bursary fund to assist members based in developing countries to attend one of ACAMH's national conferences.

Turning towards our 2007 national events, the Emanuel Miller day conference, held earlier this year, focused on Depression in Childhood and Adolescence and we were very fortunate to attract some of the key experts in this field to speak, including Professor Ian Goodyer who delivered our named lecture and Professor John March, our guest speaker from the US. Our second national event, the Jack Tizard conference, is more specialized in its topic – psychological aspects of physical illness – and supports the Association's objectives of providing up-to-date information on developments across the disciplines.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of this year's academic programme; it has been a truly innovative year, full of ideas and developments, and I look forward to working with all of you over the coming years.