

Media Release

Embargo: not to be used before 9th September 2008

Non-prescription medicines – can we improve their safe and effective supply and use?

“Billions of pounds are spent every year on non-prescription medicines and their safe and effective use is of major importance” said Dr Margaret Watson in her keynote lecture as the winner of the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust (the Trust) 2008 Practice Research Award at the British Pharmaceutical Conference today.

“Non-prescription medicines (NPMs) are an important component of self-care” she said. “However, their use can lead to health-related problems.”

Dr Watson described her research programme, called the Safe and Effective Supply And use of Medicines (SESAME). Much of this has been focused on NPMs and has demonstrated that communication during consultations for NPMs is a major factor in the outcome in terms of safety and effectiveness. One of her studies evaluated the effect of communications skills training for medicine counter assistants (MCAs), who are involved with the majority of consultations for NPMs, on the outcomes of these consultations. The results of this study are being used to develop a definitive randomised control trial of this intervention.

Dr Watson continued, “I have used novel and mixed methods to explore the safe and

.....more follows

...2

effective use and supply of NPMs, and to develop and evaluate interventions to improve their supply, particularly with my use of theory to underpin my research programme. Effective communication is essential throughout all aspects of healthcare, and the results of my studies may be relevant to self-care consultations conducted by other health professionals. My research has also highlighted the need for ensuring that pharmacy support staff are appropriately trained in order to maximise their role in the supply of NPMs.”

The Practice Research Award is presented annually by the Trust to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the field of pharmacy practice research and has the potential to become a leader in their field. Dr Watson, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Aberdeen and Public Health Pharmacist for NHS Grampian, received the award in recognition of her work into the safe and effective supply and use of non-prescription medicines.

Commenting on her award, Dr Watson said: “I was delighted to be told that I had won the 2008 award. I have spent the past 14 years undertaking health services research and pharmacy practice research, the results of which I hope have and will help to inform future pharmacy practice and the safe and effective use of non-prescription medicines. I feel that this award recognises the contribution that my work, in collaboration with many other colleagues, has made. I have always regarded this as a prestigious award and feel honoured to be one of the winners.”

Marshall Davies, Chair of the Trust, on presenting the award to Dr Watson said: “Dr Watson’s research makes an important contribution to the evidence base needed to demonstrate the input of pharmacy in delivering effective health care. The practice research award is presented to an individual judged to have made a significant contribution to pharmacy practice and who has demonstrated clear potential for leadership in their field. Margaret Watson is a worthy winner and her work, and this recognition, reflects well the Trust’s objective of promoting and developing the field of pharmacy practice research. “

Ends

.....more follows

For media enquiries please contact: Bonnie Green on 07774 650 391

Notes to editors

1. The winner of the award receives a cheque for £1000 and a small memento.

2. The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust was established by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of GB in July 1999 as an independent research charity with a broad objective to promote and develop the field of pharmacy practice research. Its trustees are drawn from senior health policy makers, leading academics, industry and retailers.

The Trust has invested over £1.5m in research; 30% supporting capacity building in pharmacy practice research and 70% on commissioned research. An annual grant from the Pharmaceutical Trust for Education and Charitable Objectives contributes to the funds of the Trust. For further information and to access reports of Trust commissioned research go to www.pprrt.org.uk

3. BPC 2008

The British Pharmaceutical Conference (BPC) 2008 will have the theme of *Pharmacy in the 21st Century, adding years to life and life to years*. The conference is organised by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain and will be held at Manchester Central from Sunday 7 September to Tuesday 9 September. For media enquiries please contact the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's Public Relations Unit - 020 7572 2653