Recent highlights from 2013

Member engagement survey
Members of the BPS Clinical Section supported the largest survey ever conducted by BPS to understand pharmacologists’ needs, now and in the near future. BPS Council and Executive Committee have already reviewed the findings and, in response, agreed key activities for 2014 and beyond.

- 89% of members are likely to recommend joining the Society – higher than other membership organizations (75%) 
- The annual Pharmacology meeting is an important benefit to members, providing an opportunity for members to present research and network 
- 77-85% of members agree the Society should be doing more to raise awareness of pharmacology with external audiences

Full summary available from www.bps.ac.uk

Meetings
The BPS annual meeting, known as Pharmacology 2013, was held in London in December. Highlights included the sessions for Specialty Registrars led by Dr Yoon Loke, Dr James Dear and Professor Dyllig Hughes. 92 clinical abstracts were submitted, of which 88 were approved (16 for oral presentations, 72 for poster presentations).

The Society also held a clinical workshop on Medical Toxicology in 2013 (organized by Dr John Thompson). BPS supports a number of events across the United Kingdom and encourages its members to apply for funding from the Society.

Improving standards in prescribing
BPS continued to collaborate with the Medical Schools Council with the aim of enabling medical students to demonstrate competencies in relation to the safe and effective use of medicines. The Prescribing Safety Assessment (PSA) pilot in 2013 was taken by nearly 5,000 UK medical students. All UK medical schools have signed up to participate in 2014, including three schools which elected to use the PSA as a summative assessment.

Responding to new UK and European policies
The UK Government announced that the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) will take responsibility for the value based assessment of medicines from January 2014. In response, BPS emphasized the crucial role of clinical pharmacologists, given their considerable expertise in evaluating clinical and cost-effectiveness of medicines, and the vital role of this discipline in ensuring the long term prospects of any new approach.

In addition, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) ran a consultation to discuss their proposed policy for access to clinical trial data for data submitted to the EMA from January 2014. BPS noted support for the policy, suggested potential improvements and highlighted the wider issues regarding clinical trial data transparency which will need to be addressed.

Clinical awards
Professor Nick Bateman (right) from the University of Edinburgh won the Society's prestigious Lilly Prize, which is awarded biennially for distinction in clinical pharmacology over many years. As part of the announcement, Professor Munir Pirmohamed, Chair of the Society's Clinical Section, highlighted Nick’s “vision and determination to improve the care of patients in relation to the management of poisoning and drug safety”. Warm congratulations are also due to the winners of the other BPS clinical prizes and awards officially announced during Pharmacology 2013:

BPS Teaching Prize “The Rang Prize” (Clinical): 
Dr Jamie Coleman, University of Birmingham

Clinical Undergraduate Prize Winner Posters:
1st Prize - Thomas Hutton, University of Southampton
2nd Prize - Eleanor Quek, University of Oxford
3rd Prize - Agnese Mustafa, King's College London

Drug Discovery of the Year:
GlaxoSmithKline, for the translational pharmacology behind the development of trametinib

GlaxoSmithKline Prize for CPS Oral Communications:
Lalarukh Harris Shalish, University of Cambridge

2014: The year ahead

Influencing government
The BPS Clinical Section is launching a programme of activity to showcase evidence for the value of clinical pharmacologists to policy makers and Government ministers. The initiative is in its early stages, but the resulting materials and outcomes will be shared on our website in the coming months.

World Congress of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology 2014
BPS will be sponsoring the following three symposia at the 17th World Congress in Cape Town, South Africa: Regulatory challenges in herbal and traditional medicines, Communicating with the public and the policy community and Using clinical toxicology studies to improve biomarkers and regulatory decisions. As a Gold Sponsor, the Society is delighted to be supporting the first such event on the African continent.

British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology
40th anniversary
The British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology is celebrating its 40th anniversary and Editor in Chief Professor James Ritter has written an editorial (bit.ly/1e4WN73) in which he reflects on the evolution of clinical pharmacology in the past 40 years. Further activities are planned throughout 2014 to mark this milestone.