



8th Congress of the European Society of Contraception
"A holistic approach to sexual health: is it needed, appropriate and possible"
23-26 June 2004
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Report from Meet the Expert session:
"Developing integrated services"
Thursday 24 June 2004, 13:00-14:00

Experts: Dr. Alison Bigrigg (UK) & Prof. Dr. Sinan Özalp (Turkey)

This session was well attended with just over 30 participants. The majority were from the countries of the United Kingdom, but there were also representation from South Africa, Turkey and Ireland.

Each participant started the workshop by describing who they were and where they worked and what the current service arrangements for the provision of contraception and management of sexually transmitted infection was in their area. Most participants worked in contraceptive services which were working towards merger co-location or increased joint working with sexually transmitted infection units or had a strategic interest in this concept.

The participants then divided into 4 groups to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and problems associated with the merger of contraceptive and STI services, as well as drivers and barriers to change.

All participants were in favour of a concept of joint services. The following advantages were noted:-

- Common clientele
- Ability to offer a broader range of services including one stop provision
- Greater range of skills
- Common clinical notes
- Opportunities for training
- Ability to have greater influence on local health care systems
- Modification of practise
- Increased career opportunities for some clinicians e.g. nurses
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The following potential problems were sighted:-

- The two services are likely to have different clinical and non-clinical protocols
- Time required to bring the services together
- Different cultures existing in the two types of services
- Lack of suitable physical premises
- Drivers to help change take place were debated at length. There was common agreement that focussing on the clients or patients helped to bring professionals together and that it was important that the client voice was heard. In addition, it was noted that with the introduction of chlamydia screening and the increase in sexually transmitted infection being seen that Genitourinary Medicine specialists were unable to deal with the workload alone. The importance of working together to build up relationships was also emphasised. The difficulties of introducing the change were acknowledged as lack of funding, physical premises and inflexibility of some staff.

In conclusion, the group decided that contraceptive and sexually transmitted infection services should be delivered in a co-ordinated manner. They acknowledged that this could be difficult to achieve, but that it was possible and worthwhile.

A. Bigrigg, 26/6/2004