



The Parkinson's Academy

Parkinson's Disease Masterclasses



An innovative educational programme from the BGS Movement Disorders Section
Supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Boehringer Ingelheim Ltd



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SUMMARY

The Parkinson's Academy and the delivery of Parkinson's Disease (PD) Masterclasses are an innovative educational programme established by the Movement Disorders Section British Geriatrics Society (BGS).



The Masterclass aim is to provide a structured training programme for senior members of the medical profession who desire formal training in both the clinical and managerial aspects of running a 'Parkinson's Disease service'. The first Masterclass was held in 2002 and the Academy is now recruiting for

courses to be held in 2009. Each Masterclass to date has recruited a maximum of 25 participants to enable intensive training and support for each participant. This approach to education has worked with the Academy and been acclaimed by the Department of Health (England) and by Parkinson's Disease Society UK in providing unique clinical skills enhancement and service development. By the end of 2008, thirteen Masterclasses in Parkinson's will have been held resulting in 270 trained specialists in PD from all four countries of the UK and two international delegate from Australia and New Zealand.

Popularity has meant that two differing Masterclasses are run; a Classic Masterclass for consultants and a Specialist Registrar Masterclass for less senior doctors who wish to develop their skills in PD management for later in their careers. Course graduates are also invited to attend further development and training programmes following graduation and this advanced training includes a mentorship programme and Advanced Masterclasses, a second Advanced Masterclass (for graduates) will be held in the autumn of 2008.

COURSE DELIVERY

The Masterclasses have been developed by an Academy faculty comprising experienced geriatricians, neurologists, movement disorder specialists and clinicians from professions allied to medicine. Funding has been with the assistance of several pharmaceutical companies – initially Pharmacia and Pfizer and now Boehringer Ingelheim who have provided a unrestricted educational grant to enable participation without huge financial cost to the individual.

The Masterclasses are run in two in two differing ways. The Classic Masterclass is held in two residential modules: the first module covering initial diagnosis and maintenance issues in PD. The second module, six months later takes participants on to complex management and palliative care issues. Between modules participants are mentored by an experienced clinician and undertake further learning through experiential visits with their mentor and through a local audit undertaken under guidance from the Faculty.

The Specialist Registrar Masterclass has the same programme but is geared towards the less experienced doctor and runs as one complete module annually. An audit is undertaken after completion of the course but presented at a follow up meeting some six months later.

The overall aims of the Masterclass programme are to:

- Enable participants to further develop effective clinical management skills and to provide access to opportunities for personal development and learning in the management of Parkinson's Disease;
- Enable participants to develop skills in the application of a disease management model in Parkinson's Disease;
- Provide opportunities for participants to develop clinical skills across organisational boundaries;
- Enable participants to critically evaluate the relationship between clinical management, the National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People and the NSF for Long Term Neurological Conditions;
- Enable participants to relate theory in Parkinson's management to practice as leaders of service development and delivery in their own local areas; and
- Understand and fulfill the clinical governance agenda in Parkinson's Disease

The Parkinson's Masterclass is unique in that it ascertains the actual needs of the participants. These are then summarized as a list of objectives and the programme is designed to reflect those objectives. Similarly, the needs analysis undertaken prior to the Masterclass informs the Faculty about the participant's background,

allowing appropriate delivery of individual contributions. Equally, the declared needs and wants of the participants have helped the Course Faculty to understand their expectations of the course.



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Typical needs from analysis of attendees needs are:

CLINICAL

- A third are concerned about diagnosis of PD and differential diagnosis of PD
- A third are concerned about complexities of PD management (drug and non-drug)

BUILDING A SERVICE

- Two thirds are concerned about finding a tool kit to build their service
- One third are looking for the collegiality of meeting others to find out how they developed their PD services

MONITORING AND AUDIT

- Participants are interested in what scales to use, and how?
- How to progress audit, with what tools and against what standards?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ISSUES

- How to work in an interdisciplinary way and how to improve working and particularly communication

RESEARCH

- What is the latest?
- What ideas can I generate?
- How do I build the confidence to do it?

EVALUATION

Each master class has been evaluated and has involved:

- An immediate post-course evaluation
- Analysis of course work
- Discussion, observation and telephone interviews with course members.
- A one-year post-course questionnaire survey

This evaluation has enabled course refinement and attention to identified participant need.

After graduation course participants have also completed a 12 month post course evaluation. This has considered the course impact on:

- The personal development of the participants
- The development of services within their localities



The results of the evaluation demonstrate the extremely positive impact of the Masterclass on:

- The development of participants' management skills for PD
- Their increased confidence in prescribing for and managing people with PD
- Their greater understanding of how to develop services and improve and expand PD service provision.

MASTER CLASS POST-COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Has your practice changed in any way since the course?

Participants stated that since the Masterclass they are:

- Generally more confident in initiating, modifying and managing treatment
- More confident in using dopamine agonists
- Have enhanced their multidisciplinary approach to PD management
- Are confident and knowledgeable in PD management, resulting in the development of dedicated PD clinics in their localities
- Receiving more referrals

What do you feel are the reasons for this change?

- New evidence and guidance given at Masterclass, interacting with peers and discussing management issues with them (50%)
- Local audit/service review stimulated by the Masterclass, which has led to service change (45%)
- Attendance at PD Masterclass, which stimulated further reading, research and development in PD (5%)

What has been the impact of your attendance?

Participants uniformly reported positive outcomes for both staff and patients. Typically this was through expansion of PD clinics. Better relationships and liaison with local neurologists had resulted.

50% of participants stated they had acquired more PD patient referrals since the course. These ranged between 20% and 100% greater than prior to the course. One respondent is now acting as clinical lead in their area. Of the remaining 50% one respondent stated he/she was still a secondary referral service whilst the others respondents stated they had already run busy PD services which post course had not resulted in more patients but clinics had changed to be more responsive.

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Have your own personal objectives for attending the course been met?

The Masterclass had universally improved networking skills and enhanced confidence in developing and delivering a PD service. The Masterclass more than matched hopes/expectations in all participants.

Specific comments include:

"Since undertaking the course my diagnostic skills have had a definite improvement but I am still on a learning curve"

I am more confident in diagnosis and management and my position as a specialist has improved



I have more knowledge about the disease and I feel confident liaising with most other specialist PD geriatricians

"I am reassured that even experts can be unsure of management of patients"

"Diagnosis and treatment can be difficult. I now am confident and know there is no harm in waiting and reviewing if unsure"

"I have enjoyed this course very much. It gave focused, informative, informal, friendly and flexible information.

"I've found this the most rewarding and effective educational experience I've had since my MRCP"

"I have acquired knowledge but am only too well aware of my limited knowledge and the need for ongoing training"

"I have learnt more and am regularly being updated by the BGS SIG"

MENTORSHIP

Participants valued the support of their mentor and some were still utilizing their mentor for benchmarking their own services against the established services of the mentor. The 'lifelong' possibility of mentorship was also greatly appreciated. Several participants have become mentors themselves for future Masterclass members.

Have you experienced any barriers in implementing service change?

Resources appear, as always, to be an issue for service change and development. Developing integrated services [across secondary, primary and tertiary care] is an issue as is funding for therapy staff in this cohort. Inability to develop therapy posts was cited more often than for development of Parkinson's Disease nurse specialist posts. There appears to be greater recognition that Parkinson's Disease Society UK will fund nursing posts if commitment can be obtained in local areas for ongoing support of a nurse but there is still no source for therapy funding.

All respondents reported great enthusiasm from local staff and several commented that if they had waited for resources to appear to facilitate service changes they would have waited for ever – "we just did it".

CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation data clearly demonstrate the positive impact of the programme in terms of increasing doctors' confidence in their ability to manage the disease. It also increased participants' understanding of how services can be developed and the contribution graduates can make as members of the BGS Movement Disorders Section, maximising the impact of their work within a specialist area of expertise.

All cohorts have demonstrated increased sophistication in networking and strategic development. This was demonstrated through their communication with acute and primary care trusts in negotiating new clinics, specialist nursing posts, their contribution to national and local PD service development working parties, and their presence national and international meetings on PD.

The PD Masterclass is currently supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Boehringer Ingelheim Ltd

MC14 CLASSIC MODULE 1

**20th -22nd May 2009
Cornwall**

MC14 CLASSIC MODULE 2

**25th - 27th November 2009
Birmingham**

SPR 4 MASTERCLASS

**6th - 10th July 2009
Cornwall**

To apply for 2009 contact redoffice@btinternet.com or call on +44 (0) 1872 225552