

Chairman's report 2006 - 2007

The provision of internet based information and support

As reported in previous years, the website and the bulletin board continue to play an important part in enabling people to make contact with the Trust, to find out more about the condition, and to seek support. We are fortunate in having a skilled webmaster, who ensures the site is technically sound without becoming unnecessarily complex technically.

The board is still monitored daily, to guard against inappropriate postings, and to ensure that all postings are answered.

The promotion and provision of local support groups

These are now restricted to ad-hoc informal activity organised by past participants of workshops.

The provision of weekend residential workshops

Nine weekend residential workshops were held this year. They catered for 59 newcomers, and 31 returning for the Improvers workshops. As these are put on depending on demand, it shows an increased awareness of their existence and usefulness.

Colin has now run workshops, with one of the two existing trained leaders as assistant. Jimmy has stepped down while studying part-time – but intends to resume workshop leading when the studying is complete.

The promotion of the concept of individual privacy in the design of public toilets

There has been no progress on this front this year.

The promotion of research into all aspects of the condition, particularly its cause and treatment

There has been no progress on this item this year.

The raising of public awareness, including that of the medical profession

The National Phobics Society is being funded to raise awareness of Toilet Phobia as a whole; of which paruresis is but one manifestation. In October they hosted a seminar at the Royal Society of Medicine which I and Baz Chalabi attended, and where Professors Salkovskis, Lovell and Gardner spoke.

As a result of this approach, Toilet Phobia was a subject on Radio 1, 2 and 4 as well as BBS News 24 and MSN UK on the 10th September.

I was interviewed by Radio Suffolk on 7 December, resulting in more contacts by listeners to the UKPT.

Contributors to our forum report more instances of Shy Bladder being mentioned in TV fictional programs, newspapers and magazines: Some reported are:

- 18 October: an ITV program where "celebrities" discusses problems using public toilets when people are about
- 2 November: a Radio 4 situation comedy program "Rubbish" mentioned Shy Bladder
- 12 November: an article in the Sun newspaper
- 7 Jan: Now magazine's problems' page referred a reader to the UKPT site.

These are unlikely to be the only occurrences; what seems to be happening is

(a) scriptwriters, always on the look out for novelty, are referring to Shy Bladder. The treatment may be minimal, but it serves the purpose of bringing the topic to the notice of the public.

(b) problem pages are more likely to refer to the term as well.

With a large proportion of the population having access to the internet, searching on the term paruresis or shy bladder eventually brings enquirers to the UKPT.

In November David and I manned the UKPT stand at the Anxiety Disorders Conference in Manchester; this was the UKPT's third year at the conference.

In January I met with Dr John Kincey, ex- Head of Psychological Services, Department of Clinical and Health Psychology, Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust. Through him I was introduced to Dr Jen Unwin, Psychology Manager Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. She was due to take up a post at Liverpool University, and was interested in meeting me to discuss the feasibility of paruresis as a subject for research by trainee clinical

psychologists. This meeting took place on 5 March 2007. It is to be hoped that 2007-2008 will see some progress there.

Other matters

The trustees agreed to pay for me to take a part-time one year course at Kendal College titled Advanced Certificate in Counselling; the aim is to build up some knowledge and competence in several therapeutic approaches, the better to be able to deliver the UKPT workshops. The course covers psychodynamic, person centred, cognitive behaviour therapy, gestalt, psychosynthesis, and brief therapy.

Andrew Smith
Chairman