

Student Iraqi Medical Association – Wales

Peer-Assisted Learning Scheme

The Student Iraqi Medical Association (SIMA) at Cardiff University was set up in September 2008 by Yousar Jafar, President of the society and now a fourth year medical student. SIMA aims to promote the classic concept of peer-assisted learning (PAL) within the medical school.

PAL has been used successfully in medical education in the United States, but has only recently found a footing in the UK. Dundee, Glasgow and Manchester medical schools have already initiated PAL schemes that have proved highly successful and now Cardiff University Medical School has followed suit in showing its support for the student-led PAL initiative that the Student Iraqi Medical Association have worked hard to promote amongst Cardiff medics.

In February 2009, SIMA committee members delivered an Anatomy revision session for first year medics attended by over 200 students. This was a highly successful event, the first of its kind to be done at Cardiff, held by 2nd and 3rd year medics to assist 1st years with their anatomy examination. The cross-year tutoring scheme that the society is dedicated to deliver throughout the academic year allows students to help each other learn effectively in an informal environment and provides opportunities for networking between years. SIMA also fundraises for the charity Iraq Relief, hence 'Iraqi' being included in the name of the society, and at the Anatomy revision session £115 was raised from students' donations which will go towards a Paediatric Oncology clinic in Baghdad.

Professor David Wilson, Medical Sub-dean, who attended part of the Anatomy revision session, praised the initiative shown by SIMA committee members saying that 'as an example of peer-led teaching, it was exemplary. It was a clear benefit to the large number of first year students who attended. It is also particularly commendable to see that year 2 and 3 medical students are interested in helping first year students and that the efforts by the committee members was to raise funds for Iraq Relief.'



© left Huda Al-Kutubi Vice-president of SIMA, middle Yousar Jafar - President of SIMA

The Student Iraqi Medical Association is a ground breaking and innovative society that provides all Cardiff medics with a unique opportunity to engage in peer-assisted learning in order to develop and learn new skills but more importantly to experience an enjoyable way of learning medicine. As one student put it, 'by students for students is always best.'

If you have any questions about the society please email jafary@cf.ac.uk. Further information about the Student Iraqi Medical Association can be found on the Cardiff Medical society website www.cardiffmedsoc.com



Professor MS John Pathy OBE, FRCP (1923-2009)

Emeritus Professor MS John Pathy died in early April at the age of 85. He was a pioneer in gerontology and the medical care of older people.

Professor Pathy was appointed as Foundation Professor of Geriatric Medicine in the then Welsh National School of Medicine in 1979. Prior to this he had already established Cardiff as a centre of innovative care for elderly people. Alongside his dynamic clinical service he was an enthusiastic teacher of medical and nursing students and played a major part in setting up the Schools of Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy. He was also responsible for the postgraduate training of nearly every doctor who specialized in geriatric medicine across Wales.

His reputation brought to his department a steady stream of visitors from every continent and he was a popular figure at international conferences and advisor to several overseas governments.

All those who knew him will remember his boundless energy, his infectious enthusiasm for whatever he was doing, his dogged determination and reluctance to ever admit defeat, his support to students and interest in colleagues in the multidisciplinary team, his old fashioned attention to clinical skills yet eagerness to embrace new technologies and his compassion and care for all the thousands of patients who came under his care.