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Report to FPSA

Funding to support attendance at Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine Annual Meeting
18-21 March 2015

I am extremely grateful to FPSA for providing funding to support my attendance at the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine Annual Meeting (SAHM 2015). I was able to contribute to the professional development committees attending in my capacity as chair of the fellowship review committee as well as present the key data from an NIHR funded randomised control study on managing obesity at the Platform Research presentations on Health Promotion and Transition.

The presentation was entitled 'Does a Motivational Lifestyle Intervention Work for Obese Young People'. The talk was well received and generated a healthy debate with a number of different views regarding the challenge of finding effective lifestyle interventions for the significant and increasing global population of young people struggling with overweight and obesity.

The meeting offered a breadth of presentations across three tracks; clinical, professional development and research. It offered outstanding opportunities to network with professional colleagues and participate in small group discussions regarding research. This year over 800 delegates registered from all over the world.

Clinical sessions focused on the management of substance abuse, eating disorders, health care transition, ADHD, transgender care, sports medicine, sleep and cardiovascular health for teens. Foundation level presentations provided evidence based reviews of the core issues whilst the advanced presentations focused more on research and treatment advances. The professional development activities provided skill based educational sessions for new and established health professionals as well as ethics, health policy and advocacy efforts as well as an opportunity to hear from new initiatives affecting adolescent health. .

The research platform presentations included primary research on Sexual health; LGBT & health disparities; STIs & HIV; and Health promotion and transition. There was also a focus on how to engage young people in research. For trainees and junior staff this year the meeting introduced a platform for them to present 'work in progress' posters.

There were a number of outstanding plenary lectures. The Gallagher lecture delivered by Professor Richard Setterson explored the process of becoming an adult. It highlighted how the understanding of adulthood has changed over the last few decades and identified the skills and resources young people need as they transition to adulthood.

The emergence of adolescent health into the global health agenda was highlighted by a plenary featuring Professors Patton, Sawyer and Viner, all leading proponents of global adolescent health. They focused on future priorities for health care providers as well as policy makers, challenging the audience to consider what kinds of integrated approaches are needed to make progress in the coming decades for adolescents and emerging young adults. This issue was also addressed in the second plenary by a panel of speakers that included two young adults who participated in the development of the Institute of Medicines 2014 report on the Health, Wealth and Safety of Young Adults. For me this was the most inspiring presentation of the whole meeting.

SAHM 2015 provided a combination of educational and networking opportunities as well as inspiring examples of individual and community approaches to adolescent health and well-being which creates opportunities for collaboration in the future.

I am grateful for the support that enabled me to attend the meeting.

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