

# Renal Pharmacy Group continues to support pharmacists in kidney care

To promote collaborative work between kidney care professionals in the multidisciplinary team, the British Renal Society has a number of affiliate groups. One such group is the UK Renal Pharmacy Group (RPG). In this column, the RPG's chair, Caroline Ashley, and the lead for research and development, Sue Shaw, discuss recent and ongoing projects in renal pharmacy.

renal pharmacy specialist education acute kidney injury chronic kidney disease professional development

In 1982, the UK Renal Pharmacy Group (RPG) was set up primarily for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians with an interest in renal pharmacy. Membership is around 170, with members based in the UK and as far afield as United Arab Emirates.

The RPG has been an affiliate of the British Renal Society (BRS) since its formation, holding a seat on the council from 1991. It has also been a core member of the National Renal Workforce Planning Group since 2002 and had representatives involved with workstreams of the National Service Framework for Renal Services.

## Clinical

The clinical subgroup is called on for advice on projects surrounding pharmaceutical issues in renal medicine, such as:

- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) clinical guidelines on acute kidney injury, chronic kidney disease, phosphate management, renal anaemia and adult renal transplantation
- Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency recommendations, such as intravenous iron administration

### Caroline Ashley

- Chair, UK Renal Pharmacy Group, and Lead Pharmacist Renal Services, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust
- carolineashley@nhs.net

### Sue Shaw

- Advanced Renal Services Pharmacist, Derby Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- sue.shaw5@nhs.net

- National Framework Agreement for Peritoneal Dialysis

- Renal dialysis and renal transplant clinical reference groups.

The RPG's website ([www.renalpharmacy.org.uk](http://www.renalpharmacy.org.uk)) hosts a Q&A forum where members can pose a question to other members. This is supported by a monthly teleconference for members to discuss any issues further.

## Education

The RPG provides specialist education and training to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians at its annual conference. This provides both updates on new technologies and advances in renal pharmacy and opportunities to network with colleagues working in renal units across the UK.

A beginner's session is included for those new to renal medicine to introduce them to drug dosing in renal impairment, dialysis and transplantation. For those more experienced in renal medicine, tailored workshops are held which have covered transplantation and vasculitis.

The RPG has also assisted with the development of the Solid Organ Transplant Pharmacists Association, which aims to promote formal dialogue between specialist pharmacists involved in the care of patients with a solid organ transplant, by facilitating a network of expertise and continuous professional development.

Furthermore, the RPG has produced a competency framework to support renal pharmacists. The group is a founder partner in the new faculty within the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and has integrated its work within the national Advanced to Consultant Level Framework for pharmacists. This was adopted

following the launch of the RPS' Advanced Framework in 2013.

Finally, the RPG hosted a renal pharmacy session at the BRS conference in 2015, and has been invited to plan a session at the 2016 UK Kidney Week. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in all areas of practice may encounter patients with renal disease, and education and training is provided for them in many ways. This includes the opportunity for members of the RPG to present on hot renal topics at the annual Clinical Pharmacy Congress.

## Publications

Development of information resources has always been key to the activities of the RPG. In 1994, Ray Bunn, a previous chair of the RPG, wrote *An A-Z of Drug Use and Guide to Patient Counselling in Renally Impaired Adults* (Bunn, 1994), which was published following receipt of an educational grant from Abbott. About 1000 copies were sold, and the RPG donated £1 from every copy sold to the British Kidney Patient Association.

The publishing rights were subsequently taken over by Radcliffe Medical Press, and in 1999 the first edition of *The Renal Drug Handbook* was published, written by members of the RPG. The book has been sold worldwide, and is widely used by all members of the renal healthcare team. The second edition was published in 2004, the third edition appeared in 2009, and the fourth edition was published in 2014 (Ashley and Dunleavy, 2014). The book is now also available online as the Renal Drug Database ([renaldrugdatabase.com](http://renaldrugdatabase.com)), and it is hoped that an app will be developed in the near future. All royalties

from the book go towards funding other RPG activities.

The RPG also publishes the *Introduction to Renal Therapeutics* together with the Pharmaceutical Press (Ashley and Morlidge, 2008). This covers topics including acute renal failure, chronic renal impairment, various forms of dialysis, transplantation, renal bone disease, renal anaemia, hypertension and diet, and was written by some 20 practising renal pharmacists.

*Renal News* is distributed twice a year to members and pharmacists in the profession to advertise initiatives, and provide further education and training regarding renal pharmaceutical issues.

The RPG is working during 2016 in collaboration with the Renal Association to produce updated patient information leaflets on a variety of medications.

## Research and development

The RPG aims to support its members who are undertaking research and development across renal pharmacy. In the coming months, it hopes to provide support through research grants. At present, the RPG supports the BRS in reviewing research grant applications

and abstract submissions. This subgroup also provides support to the acute kidney injury clinical study group.

## Recent projects

Members of the RPG are working on the national acute kidney injury Think Kidneys programme to help produce guidance, such as the Medicines Optimisation Toolkit for patients with acute kidney injury (Ashley et al, 2015). This was initially developed for use in secondary care, but has now been adapted for primary care.

Sick day guidance in acute kidney injury has also been developed around temporarily withholding medications when patients are acutely unwell and at risk of acute kidney injury (Griffith et al, 2015). As part of this work, the RPG has collaborated with the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education to produce a national acute kidney injury campaign, which has been distributed to all pharmacy professionals in England. This included learning resources, also in e-learning formats, such as workshops, quizzes, challenges, pledges and a twitter chat.

If you are a pharmacist or pharmacy technician caring for patients with

kidney disease and would like to become a member of the RPG, go to the website ([www.renalpharmacy.org.uk](http://www.renalpharmacy.org.uk)). Other members of the team are welcome to discuss affiliation and collaborative working initiatives. This website is being revamped to ensure it is easy to use. Those who are members of BRS or have attended their conference will recognise a familiar name listed here who is available if you require further information. **JRN**

## References

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