

ABPI Cymru Wales Annual Lecture and Dinner provides food for thought

“Human curiosity – paired with our empathy – leads to investigation.

“And investigation – paired with our ingenuity – leads to innovation.”

This was the key message at ABPI Cymru Wales Annual lecture and dinner held at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff on 1 November. The speaker was British professor, medical doctor, scientist, television presenter and politician, Lord Robert Winston.

Robert Winston was made a life peer in 1995 as Baron Winston, of Hammersmith in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. He is a former Chairman of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology and a board member and Vice-Chairman of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. His television career includes the series *Superhuman*, *The Secret Life of Twins*, *Child of Our Time*, *Human Instinct*, and the BAFTA award-winner *The Human Body*.

Lord Winston took as his theme ingenuity and innovation in medicine. His wide ranging analysis emphasised the pace of change and innovation in a range of scientific disciplines, and particularly acknowledged the ever advancing world of medicines, which he described as integral to treating and eliminating disease, expanding knowledge and increasing human advancement.

Speaking at the event of over 200 people, Simon Jose, the President of the ABPI, said: “Britain has led the field globally in life sciences for many years. Today one in five of all major medicines used around the world was discovered in the UK. Innovation of medicines not only has clear benefits of improved patient lives and outcomes but such progress has eradicated some diseases.

“Developing innovative medicines is a complex, and expensive process that remains full of uncertainty, but the risks are worthwhile taking - innovation has brought us life-changing medicines. Thanks to incremental innovation AIDS is no longer a death sentence. Statins, too, have saved thousands of lives, and without innovation we will not create the medicines we need to fill the unmet clinical need of the future.”

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Engaging with the Assembly, responding to consultation

ABPI Cymru Wales has been busy engaging with the newly appointed Health and Social Care Committee in the National Assembly for Wales.

Back in September we began a productive cycle of meetings when Mark Drakeford AM met with us. Mark is the new chair of the Committee and is a former Chief Special Adviser to the Welsh Government. He has particular expertise in health policy.

We have already submitted evidence to one of the first two policy enquiries being held by the Committee.

We responded formally to the Committee's current enquiry, which looks at the role of community pharmacy in Wales. One aspect of the enquiry is specific to the further provision of services that could be made available via community pharmacies. In our response we urged the Committee to consider how the pharmaceutical industry could further support community pharmacy in its role to deliver advanced/enhanced and other services, for the benefit of the NHS and its patients. Preventing as well as treating the burden of disease in Wales is a huge under-taking and innovative collaborations may be part of the solution.

There are several examples where ABPI member companies have worked with community pharmacy to develop services that can create real patient benefit and improve health outcomes: services that make use of all the advantages of community pharmacy and contribute to the goals of NHS Wales.

These 'joint-working' case studies include asthma MURs, cardio-vascular risk assessment, smoking cessation and vaccinations, to mention just a few.

A more tacit recognition and support of the potential for joint working between community pharmacy and the pharmaceutical industry may have significant benefits to both commercial partners, the NHS and the people of Wales.

ABPI Cymru Wales has taken the opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government's recent consultation exercise into science in Wales.

In our response submission we offered support to any initiatives which focus efforts in Wales to bridge the gaps between academia, industry and the Welsh Government.

It is particularly important that any initiatives coming from the Strategy, which will follow on from the consultation, should have clear outcomes and deliverables, both in the short and longer term.

We also welcomed the idea of the establishment of a high-level industry-led group and expressed a hope that the pharmaceutical industry will be fully represented on such a body. We recommended the introduction of business leaders, not necessarily based in Wales, who are prepared to 'fly the flag' across the globe in the priority science programmes of the Welsh Government.

It was good to see life sciences at the heart of the consultation document.

NHS Wales

ABPI Cymru Wales has continued our active programme of engagement with the NHS in Wales. In recent months meetings on common issues have been held with key individuals from the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) and the Medicines Management Programme Board.

For the third year running, ABPI Cymru Wales has also commissioned an independent analysis of the transparency of the websites of various bodies in NHS Wales. This exercise has previously revealed much needs to be done to increase consistency and transparency.

The outcomes of the latest study will form the basis for discussion with individual LHBs over coming months.

Comment: The importance of new medicines



Announcing her five-year vision for the NHS in Wales, Together for Health, Health Minister Lesley Griffiths recognises the challenges we face and that we need to do things differently. She has pledged to put primary and community services at the centre of healthcare delivery. But the Welsh Government's vision of a shift away from hospital based settings will depend on having the tools to treat people successfully closer to home, writes Dr Rick Greville ABPI Cymru Wales Director.

In November, a report by the Office of Health Economics (OHE) for ABPI Cymru Wales revealed that chronic conditions such as heart disease, hypertension and asthma are placing on increasing demand on the Welsh NHS. A fifth of the Welsh population is now aged 65 or over and the latest statistics show that 82% of this sub-population in Wales has at least one long term illness, an evidence-based approach to tackling chronic disease including the appropriate use of new and established medicines, is fundamental to reducing hospital admissions and improving the health outcomes of the people of Wales.

Yet, while these pressures are likely to grow further, investment in new and innovative medicines that could reduce hospital admissions and allow more people to be treated closer to home, is severely lagging behind that in England. The OHE report found that, three years after licensing, the use per person in Wales of new medicines recommended without restriction by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is less than half that in England.

While affordability is often given as a reason for not investing in the latest treatments, Welsh Health Boards have consistently under-spent their medicines budgets over recent years. Figures compiled for ABPI Cymru Wales show that the health service in Wales under-spent its medicines allocation from the Welsh Government by over £70m in 2009/10, and it remains unclear how these resources were spent.

Therefore, although the number of prescriptions dispensed has been increasing faster in Wales, this growth has been more than off-set by decreases in average cost per prescription which have fallen at a greater rate than other UK countries. The overall impact has been that the rate of growth in the primary care medicines bill is much slower in Wales and the share of total NHS expenditure on medicines has been declining. In fact, the proportion of the NHS budget spent on medicines prescribed in the community has fallen steadily since the establishment of the Assembly in 1999 – down from 13% to under 10%.

But, as the elderly population continues to grow, can we afford to continue along the path of declining investment in medicines and overlook the significant benefits that innovation can bring?

Of course the NHS in Wales faces tough decisions and must balance all areas of expenditure, but it must also recognise the incremental benefits these medicines offer, such as reduced side effects, increased effectiveness and allowing more patients to manage long term conditions closer to home, rather than in a hospital setting.

Meet Jeremy Felvus, Chairman of WIG



Jeremy Felvus is Pfizer's Senior Government Affairs Manager and Chairman of the ABPI Cymru Wales Industry Group (WIG).

Jeremy started work as a Local Government management trainee before joining the NHS. Initially trained in Management Services, he later spent time as a Hospital Manager, locality Commissioning Director and Health Authority Director. During a period in the Welsh Health Planning Forum he was a part of the team that introduced an innovative approach to strategic health service planning. He also obtained an MBA from Cardiff Business School.

Jeremy joined the pharmaceutical industry with Pfizer in 1998 and has had a range of roles. He is Pfizer's UK policy lead on pharmacy, supply chain, patent life and counterfeiting. Jeremy has been active in WIG since its formation a decade ago, and is especially interested in policy and communications. He has been Chairman since 2006 and in this capacity represents the industry on the Welsh Pharmaceutical Committee.

"WIG is a great vehicle for pulling together the talents of the pharmaceutical industry. Our challenge is to change the environment to one where all parties work together to improve access to innovative medicines in Wales."

About us

The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Cymru Wales represents innovative research-based biopharmaceutical companies, both large and small, leading an exciting new era of biosciences in the UK.

Our industry, a major contributor to the economy of the UK, brings life-saving and life-enhancing medicines to patients. Our members supply 80 per cent of all medicines used by the NHS, and are researching and developing over two-thirds of the current medicines pipeline, ensuring that the UK remains at the forefront of helping patients prevent and overcome diseases.

Working with our Research Affiliate Members, leaders in pharmaceutical R&D, is vital in promoting the UK as a destination of choice for international life sciences investment.

The ABPI Cymru Wales Office was established in 2003 to represent member companies who research, develop and manufacture branded medicines in the devolved environment after companies with a special interest in Wales came together under the umbrella of the ABPI Cymru Wales Industry Group (WIG). Since their establishment, both organisations have developed partnerships within the Welsh Government, National Assembly for Wales, NHS Wales, professional organisations, patient organisations and academia.

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