

# Academic Family Practice

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first academic body of general practice was formed in 1959 when an overseas branch of the Royal College of General Practitioners was formed. In 1969 an independent South African College was formed which subsequently amalgamated with the College of Medicine of South Africa, and the Faculty members established the first degree for general practitioners — the Membership of the Faculty of General Practice, MFGP (SA).

With the passage of time the need for an independent academic body of family practice/primary care with wider aims and objectives became evident and in 1980 the South African Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care was formed.

## WHAT IS THE ACADEMY

The Academy is an independent medical body involved in family practice. Its membership is made up of medical practitioners from both the public and private sectors who accept the aims and objectives of the Academy by committing themselves to take part in continuing medical education and practising the highest standards of medical care. It includes representatives from all the university departments of family practice.

Although completely independent, it co-operates on academic matters with bodies such as the South African Medical Association, the College of Medicine of South Africa, University Departments and units of Family Practice, State, Provincial and Local Health Authorities as well as the Health Authorities of the Homelands and neighbouring states.

The Academy is the largest medical academic body of any one discipline in the country and is recognised as the representative body of family practice in South Africa by the World Organisation of National Colleges, Academies of General Practitioners/Family Physicians.

## WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE ACADEMY

- to set appropriate standards of family practice for all the citizens of our country
- to promote understanding of comprehensive family practice in undergraduate medical education
- to promote and set standards of vocational training for young doctors before they become established in public, private or academic family practice
- to advise and assess in the continuing education of the established family practitioners
- to encourage and conduct research in family health and practice
- to study and encourage improvement of the organisation within family practice in its widest aspects
- to be involved in the co-ordination and education of nursing and para-medical staff involved in family practice/primary care
- to issue publications on family practice and related subjects

The past three decades have seen a resurgence of family practice/primary care throughout the world. The growth of medical specialization has brought spectacular advances in medical knowledge and technology. On the other hand it has led to perfunctory, fragmented and episodic medical care and the traditional concept of personal, continuing, preventive and holistic care has been threatened. The need for well-trained family practitioners has never been greater. This has been recognised by those concerned about the rising costs of hospital-based specialist care.

The three principles that have led to dramatic changes in academic family practice throughout the world are:-

- that unless there is a sound primary level of health care, the rest of the system will be wasted, expensive and inefficient, no matter how skilled or how expert or how highly specialized it is
- that family practitioners require vocational training for the same reasons as their specialist colleagues require it
- that times change, populations and knowledge increase so that the modern family practitioner fills a rôle of leader and co-ordinator of a comprehensive health team

More and more people are at last realizing that general practice, family practice and primary care belong to the same family and can only be separated to secure double standards in medicine.

## WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE ACADEMY

The need for post-graduate training has become more important with the growth of medical knowledge and the development of modern therapeutics. It is said that the half life of medical knowledge is five years.

Clinical training for a medical student is largely hospital-based and focuses on the diagnosis and management of established disease. Health promotion, disease prevention and the early detection of ill-health play a very small part in the curriculum.

In the past, generations of family practitioners have been shocked that their training prepared them poorly to deal with the problems that present to them each day.

By joining the Academy, you will have the opportunity of making contact with a network of family practitioners throughout the country, both in public, private and academic spheres.

An academic body is a forum for all of us, with common goals, to participate. Where ideas, views and experiences can be exchanged. We are the experts in our field and must be the teachers and the learners at the same time.



## Academic Family Practice — continued

### HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

- by attending regular lectures and workshops
- by joining local discussion groups
- by receiving the monthly Academy journal — SA Family Practice
- by joining regional Academy committees of your choice such as undergraduate, postgraduate, research, practice management committees, etc.
- by obtaining expertise in undertaking your own research
- by becoming involved in national and regional research projects
- by attending the Academy Congress which is held every second year
- by being able to attend the international (WONCA) congresses, held every third year

If you wish to enter family practice you will have the

opportunity through the Academy, of undertaking vocational training under supervision in the same way for the same reasons that your colleagues undertake vocational training in the other branches of medicine. You will see the whole spectrum of family practice/primary care and make personal contact with many family practitioners who will help you plan your future in a realistic way.

You will be assisted to prepare for the MFGP(SA) and/or a Masters Degree at one of the university departments of Family Medicine.

### THE FUTURE

Unity is strength. By joining you can add your voice to planning and determining your own future and that of family practice/primary care. The Academy is able to make direct representation to government, universities and other bodies locally, nationally and internationally.

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACADEMY OF FAMILY PRACTICE/ PRIMARY CARE S.A.

I, ..... (full names)  
am a registered medical practitioner on the Register of the South African Medical & Dental Council and practice in the field of general practice/primary care. I hereby apply to become a member of The South African Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care. I support the objectives of the Academy and agree to pay the subscription fees and to abide by the Constitution of the Academy.

Enclosed, a cheque for R20,00      Registration fee

   R30,00      Annual subscription  
Total                                   R50,00

Signature: .....

Qualifications: .....

Date of Qualification: .....

Postal address: .....

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Please post to:      The SA Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care,  
   Rooms 24/25, Medical House,  
   Central Square,  
   PINELANDS 7430.

*For further enquiries contact Rose Jonker, tel no (021) 538205.*