

Schools Science conference 2007

Chairman's Report & Evaluation 2007

Healthcare Sciences & Allied Health Professions
At the heart of the NHS



Schools Science conference 2007



National Science & Engineering Week
4th Annual Schools Science Conference
Thursday 15th March 2007
Kensington Town Hall, 9.15-3.45PM
Schools Science Conference 2007

Presented by Healthcare Scientists and Allied Health Professionals from London

Energy, excitement and enthusiasm were tangibly emanating from Kensington Town Hall on March 15th at the 4th Annual Schools Science Conference. Almost 400, year 9-13, students plus their teachers attended and one teacher remarked "I thought last year was fantastic, but this is even better!"

When the students arrived they passed through the empty halls into the auditorium where the tenor of the day was set by Keith Ison (Federation of Healthcare Scientists) with a simple experiment, performed with the aid of one of the students, demonstrating the perfect engineering of the human



body. Keith described the many aspects of science – physical, biological and physiological – and their importance in understanding the functions of the body and in diagnosis and treatment when things go wrong. Pippa Hodgson (Skills for Health) told the students about the new adaptable and flexible approach to learning and career development within the NHS, explaining how it is possible to start in one professional area and to go on to obtain the necessary skills to move into another.

On leaving the auditorium, the students found that the halls had been filled with interactive, hands-on demonstrations put on by healthcare professionals from across London. On the upper floor, there was a series of presentations about fat and healthy eating – "Meat and Two Veg – or Proteins Fats and Carbs". The students

learned about how to image fat in the body and that where this fat is stored is more important than appearance for health. They heard about the importance of diet for health, when your body knows you have eaten enough, and how your body image and psyche affect your eating habits.

On the ground and lower floors, students tried to suture wounds, donned lab coats and gloves to perform diagnostic tests, imaged blood flow in the heart, as well as witnessing a baby moving in the womb. They looked inside each other's ears and learned about deafness. They discovered the causes of allergies. They made pharmacological ointments. They examined microbes under microscopes and growing on agar plates. They purified blood cells. They learned about genetic

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manipulations and tissue typing. They imaged the body's internal organs, fractured bones, etc. and much, much more. Just about every profession in healthcare was represented – microbiologists, biochemists, physiotherapists, dieticians, chiropractors, audiologists, perfusionists, opticians, medical engineers, radiotherapists, andrologists, podiatrists, immunologists, pharmacists, psychologists, virologists, speech & language therapists, maxio-facial engineers, plastic surgeons, nuclear physicists etc. There were workshops based on “A day in my life...”, ranging from an Avian Flu Expert to “Defence against Bioterrorism” from someone resembling the Hogwarts’ Professor of Defence against the Dark Arts. All the while the students asked questions to find out more as well as learning about qualifications and training in the different professions. Two teachers remarked that had they had something similar they might not have gone into teaching. Students were able to fill their delegate bags with career leaflets and prizes for taking part in the various activities.

The closing session was in the auditorium. Two digital cameras, donated by Olympus, were presented to the students whose completed questionnaires were drawn out of the pile. Other prizes were presented to the winners of the various quizzes and competitions set by the healthcare scientists. Alison Mowbray, Olympic Silver Medalist (Athens) gave an awe-inspiring talk, demonstrating that it is possible to realise your dream. Alison sent the students home with her personal mantra – *Expect Nothing, Blame No one, Do Something !*



Throughout the day, the students learned that scientists are not the portrayed stereotypic anoraks but real people with exciting jobs and amazing lives. They learned about lots of diseases, and found out that diagnostic investigations are exciting and that you have to be innovative to fix the problems. Much more exciting than a computer game!

That was the end of the day for the students but the conference is continuing on the website where the students can ask more questions of our experts, read the reports from the student reporters, and find the winner of the third Olympus camera awarded to the report judged best by the organisers. They can also check to see that they collected all 10 Tips for Healthy Living.

Web address: www.srgprojectmanagement.co.uk/ssc2007/

The Organisers are grateful to all of the Healthcare Scientists and Allied Health Professionals for taking part and making the conference so successful. This year we had to be self-financing and we are very grateful to our numerous sponsors, listed on the website and programme. Of course, the conference would not have been so enjoyable without the enthusiastic participation of the students and their teachers – so thanks also to them. Now it is on with the planning of our 5th Conference and securing the funding.

Don Henderson, Chairman, Organising Group
April 2007

A selection of high-resolution images which may be reproduced with this article are available to download from www.srgprojectmanagement.co.uk/ssc2007/photographs.htm

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Summary Review of Questionnaire Responses

Teachers

The Teachers' Evaluation forms showed that this event was useful for their students and that previous events had encouraged students to enter a healthcare career pathway, with students opting for the biomedical sciences, optometry, podiatry, speech and language, physiotherapy and radiography, in addition to medicine, dentistry and nursing. This and previous events had a strong positive influence upon students' career aspirations, subject choices and motivation to study science.

Students

The Students' Evaluation Forms clearly show that the students found this event to be enjoyable and stimulating. They particularly appreciated the opportunity to meet the healthcare professionals, learn what each was about and to try their hand at the various demonstrations and exhibits. This was a friendly, fun and relaxed atmosphere in which to meet the professionals. The students were awestruck at the sheer number, variety and complexity of the professions. The presenters' excitement and enthusiasm for their work and professions impressed the students. Although, many had considered careers within the health sector, this event had broadened their choices with 88% saying that after this event they would consider joining the NHS. After this event, there were significant increases in the numbers of students reporting that they would study science and continue onto higher education and University. More than 80% of the students rated healthcare professionals as exciting and 97% would recommend this event to their friends.

Teacher & Student Responses

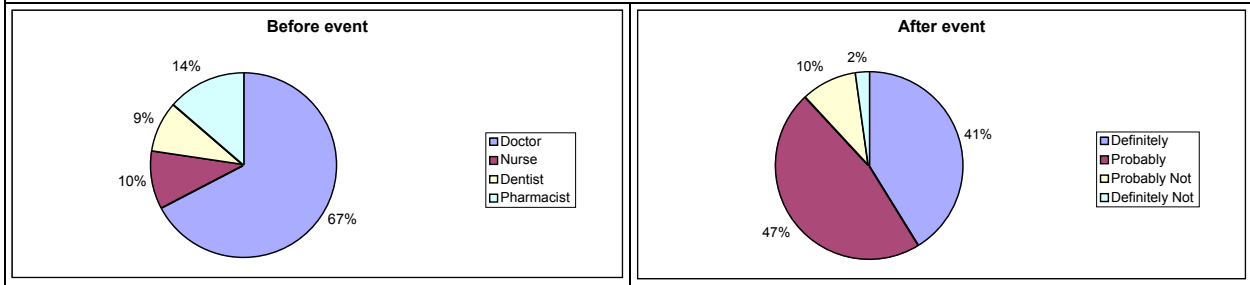
The complete report of the teacher and student evaluations are available at: www.srgprojectmanagement.co.uk/ssc2007/ A selection of high resolution images taken at the conference can be viewed on this website.

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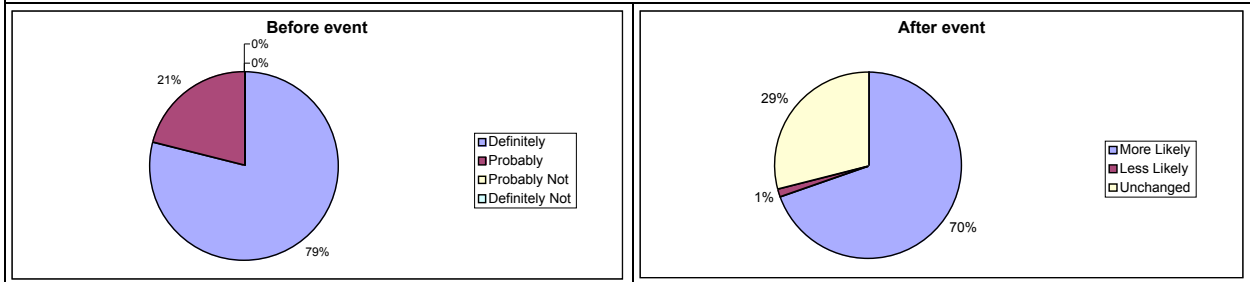
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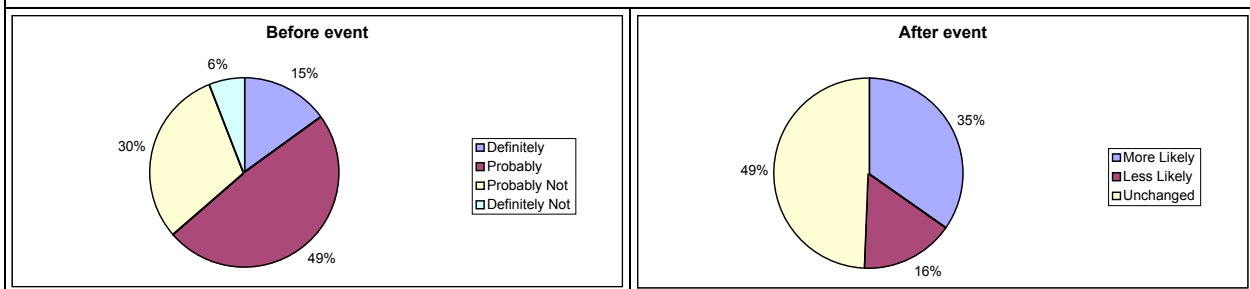
Considered a healthcare career in the NHS



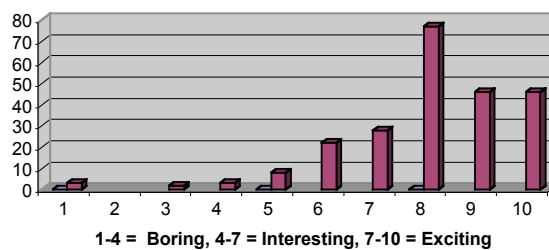
Considered going to University or other Higher Education Institute



Considered a career in chemistry or the chemical sciences



On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate healthcare scientists?



Sample comment

“Just to let you know how much we enjoyed the Science Conference yesterday.

The speakers and the interactive displays were varied and really interesting.

The way you organised the groups so that it wasn't too crowded when our students went to the interactive displays so they could really get involved was very good. The catering was brilliant.

Thank you and well done”.

Don Henderson, Chairman, Organising Group
April 2007

