

# Association Award

## Dr Michael Farquhar



Mike is a paediatric sleep physician. He uses his clinical expertise, not just for the benefit of patients, but also for his colleagues, working tirelessly to promote an effective approach to night-shift work.

He first came to our notice through social media. Our Fatigue Working Group was just starting work, launching the trainee survey on fatigue and considering what we could do to address the issue. He replied enthusiastically when we contacted him, attended our meetings and gave both his time and wisdom, quietly steering us towards effective strategies to promote good sleep hygiene. He had already launched a very effective educational package about fatigue and shift work at the Evelina Children's Hospital London, where he works. This was followed by a Trust wide (Guys and St Thomas') campaign to improve shift working, the 'HALT – take a break' campaign reported in the Health Service Journal. His work has spread throughout the London School of Paediatrics and to the RCPCH. Instead of imposing his ideas, he encouraged us to develop what might work in anaesthesia and intensive care medicine. He's the expert behind all our posters.

As well as being an integral part of the Fatigue Working Group, he has travelled far and wide to deliver lectures on fatigue and shift work, personally educating hundreds of anaesthetists and intensivists. We've seen him in Liverpool, Newcastle, Belfast and London, educating anyone who will listen on how their circadian rhythm works and how to minimise the impact of the sleep deprivation that night work inevitably causes. His talk was videoed as an RCoA ARIES talk and is worth a watch; he's clearly an expert in his field. Talks are always engagingly delivered but with a hard-hitting message – one that the medical profession, our managers and leaders need to hear.

He uses his very wide network of contacts, everywhere from academic research to the media. Whenever you meet someone thinking about healthcare workers and night shifts, Mike's name comes up – he might have advised on a research project or been the driving force behind a national TV report. He is constantly creating connections, joining up groups doing similar work so they can work together on similar projects with a consistent message. His message and his endeavours have created that consistency that the project needs. As well as with anaesthetists and paediatricians, he has worked with Emergency Medicine physicians and the BMA (and, no doubt, many others we are not aware of). His editorial for *Anaesthesia* has the highest altimetric score of any article in the journal and over 1 million followers have viewed it, reflecting the interest in and importance of this issue.

Mike is undoubtedly one of the UK's leading experts on fatigue, sleep and shift-working in healthcare. Despite this, he is approachable, contactable and has listened and made suggestions in a hugely supportive manner. The Association hopes we can change the culture so people don't work or drive when critically tired; but it will be Mike who is the true driving force behind this.

We are delighted that he is being recognised for all his work for the specialty of anaesthesia and intensive care and beyond.

**Drs Nancy Redfern and Emma Plunkett**  
Consultant Anaesthetists