

WHO GOT THAT JOB?



Profiling people recently appointed to high-profile positions

PUI-LING LI

Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust medical director

THE NEW medical director of London's largest community trust says her career path began when, as a child, she would act as a translator for her Chinese-speaking family members.

Today, London consultant in public health medicine Pui-Ling Li will split her week between two jobs — her new role as medical director of CLCH (Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust) and her current job as NHS London's deputy regional director of public health.

Dr Li's interest in providing care in the community stems from her final year at the Royal Free Hospital Medical School in 1986.

She explains: 'While working as [what would now be] a foundation doctor 1, I would support members of the Chinese community who did not speak English. I would meet with them in Chinese community centres across London and take down their medical history, so that they could take it with them to see their GP or their hospital specialist. I feel strongly that health advocacy and interpretation should be done by trained staff and not by bilingual children. This stemmed from my own experience of having to interpret for my family as a child. I was successful in getting funding from the Department of Health in 1987 to further this work, which led to the establishment of what is now the Chinese National Healthy Living Centre. This work led to my interest in public health and primary care.'

CLCH was formed last year to provide services for 900,000 patients in the London boroughs of Barnet, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster. In October, it won a £25m contract to deliver primary care services to 1,300 inmates at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. Part of Dr Li's role will involve helping the trust to achieve foundation status, which she says will give CLCH more flexibility to develop services that respond to the needs of local people.

Dr Li says her priorities as medical director will include developing clinical pathways to help patients with complex health conditions to receive care in the community or at home.

She adds: 'There is now such a wealth of evidence that positive early childhood experiences contribute to better outcomes

throughout children's lives. Our trust has a critical role to play in giving children a better start, and supporting new mums, through services such as our health visiting service.'

Dr Li says: 'Another exciting opportunity, which will put this trust at the forefront, is the work that is under way to integrate adult social care. My focus as the medical director is to bring a clinical understanding of the management of long-term conditions, prevention and re-ablement to discussions.'

And she says she will draw on her past experience, adding that her dual roles will complement each other. As medical director, she will get a unique insight into the challenges that frontline clinicians face, while her experience in public health adds a strategic approach to driving health improvement, she says.

She explains: 'I have developed tools for commissioners to reduce health variation across London, such as the London sexual health strategic framework. To support the transition to the new public health system, I developed a talent management tool for directors of public health in London. Using the findings of this work, I designed a leadership programme which would enhance their leadership capability, and offer them the opportunity to undertake shared learning with executives in local authorities.'

With NHS London, she has been involved in health prevention in areas such as TB, sexual health, immunisations and NHS health checks.

She says: 'In the field of innovation, [CLCH is] particularly proud of our award-winning work with the North West London integrated care pilot, a programme that provides joined-up care for elderly patients over 75 and patients with diabetes, through a multi-disciplinary approach.'

Dr Li says: 'My experience of working with the Chinese community has shown me how important it is to listen to and involve the local community. It's about listening to their wants, needs and aspirations. Our job in the public sector is to meet these needs and wants as best we can within budgets, delivering services that are appropriately designed and of a high quality.'

Interview by Mike Foster

Do you want to share the story of your new job? Email us at bmanews@bma.org.uk or write to BMA News, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP.

HYPOCRITUS'S GUIDE TO HEALTH TOPICS

Hypocritus explains his sense of déjà vu about Olympic ticket applications

RECENTLY, THERE was a brief item of correspondence in this fine journal by a trainee doctor commenting that the process of application for Olympic tickets was strikingly similar in terms of incomprehensibility to that devised for job applications by MMC (Modernising Medical Careers, for those of us lucky enough not to have used it).

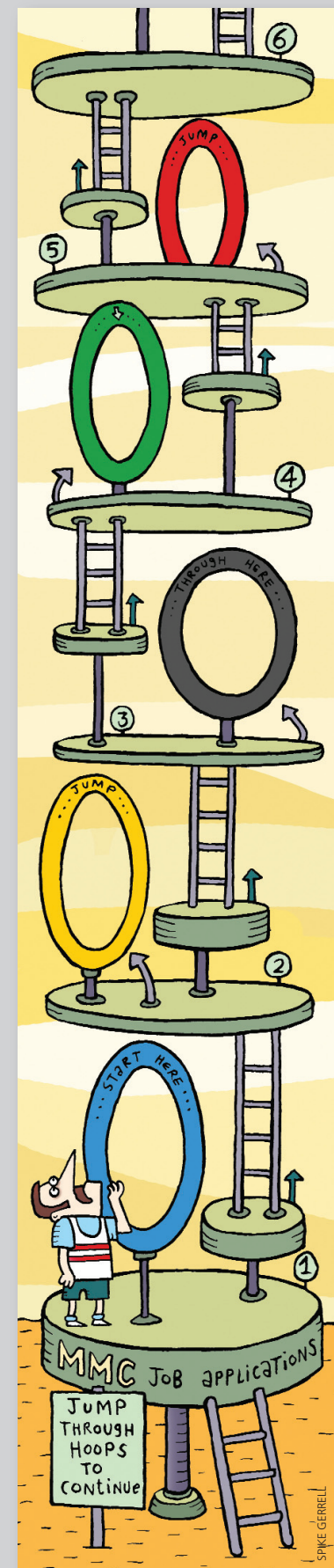
Said doctor's observations are indeed accurate, but I feel that the parallels between the two processes go far beyond the mere process of application.

First, you have to apply for as many jobs as possible in the hope of just getting one. Second, you are liable to be successful only for a job in which you have little interest. Third, it requires relocation to a part of the country where you do not want to go, in order to take up the successful application. Fourth, it becomes apparent that many of the jobs have gone to internal candidates or candidates from abroad. Fifth, once the application process has been completed, the organisers announce that there are in fact other jobs that might be available in the near future that you might actually want, although the timing has yet to be announced. Finally, if you train really hard for several years, you might be able to attend without going through MMC at all.

However, one area where they differ is in relation to copyright issues. While MMC would probably be happy to lend its abbreviation to Marathon, Mountain biking and Cycling (the ultramodern triathlon) for free, those with dibs on the Olympic trademark are not so keen the other way around. I have it on good authority that one trust's attempt to run a mini-Olympics in the grounds of the hospital are at risk of being scuppered under the threat of breach of copyright unless sums of money change hands for the privilege of using the word 'Olympics'.

Hardly in the spirit of the Games, methinks. Shame — I would love to see the porters, doctors and nurses in competition over the 100 metre dash for the bar.

Still, I look forward to 2012 as it is not something we are going to see every day — especially if you were one of the lucky ones allocated with tickets for the ladies beach volleyball final.



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