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Time for medical leadership to end 'amateur sport' status

Medical leadership needs to become a professional discipline if we are to manage the complex economic and demographic challenges we face – it needs to be robust, with strong teams and the right culture, the Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management's (FMLM's) medical director has warned today (15 October, 2013).

Addressing an audience of more than 700 doctors at the FMLM 2013 annual conference in Edinburgh, Dr Peter Lees emphasised that the challenges will continue to tighten their grip. He said it is essential that the medical profession identifies the evidence that links collective leadership to high quality outcomes for patients, and announced that this life-blood will come from the joint research agenda between FMLM, The King's Fund and the Center for Creative Leadership to be presented by Prof Michael West.

Dr Lees explained how FMLM's approach was endorsed by Francis, who concluded in his report that leadership and management needed to be seen as respectable professions within the health care system. He highlighted the forthcoming workshop by Clare Marx as part of the drive to devise the standards of medical leadership expected of doctors.

Dr Lees also described the need to learn from other sectors, including industry, and welcomed the forthcoming session by Dr Richard Heron, who would be sharing his experience as Vice President, Health, and Chief Medical Officer with BP International Ltd.

Ground-breaking new leadership from the next generation of doctors is vital, Dr Lees continued, particularly the example shown by Dr Nikita Kanani, a newly qualified GP, whose innovative approach to quality improvement and leadership has been widely recognised within the profession.

Whilst acknowledging that there is much to do, Dr Lees pointed to the huge encouragement to be gleaned from the fact that FMLM, only two-years old, has attracted a membership of 2,000 doctors ranging from students to the most senior leaders. His call at the conference was for members to seize the opportunity and become active participants in building a dynamic leadership organisation dedicated to improving patient care and which, like so many medical royal colleges, endures for centuries.

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