Modernising Scientific Careers

Under the Microscope with NHS Scientists

Wednesday 14th March 2012
Reported by Jane Blower Scientific Director NHS Midlands and East (East Midlands)

This year National Science and Engineering week took place between the 11th and 18th March. The main event was the Big Bang exhibition at the NEC in Birmingham, as well as this national event many local events were held and on the 14th March The National Space centre in Leicester was the venue for the ‘NHS Scientists Under the Microscope’ event, a careers event aimed at Years 11 and 12, their teachers and parents, and those interested in and planning a career in NHS healthcare science.

The idea was to motivate young people to become the scientists of the future, to show them how many career options there are within the NHS and what an exciting rewarding career science can be.

The event was sponsored by the Midlands and East NHS and Leicestershire Education and Business Company (LEBC) working in partnership with NHS Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC).

Several school groups attended the evening with their teachers and other students attended with their parents.

There were a series of inspirational talks by healthcare scientists about the work they do in the NHS, why they enjoy their work and the opportunities there are for young people to follow a career in healthcare science in the NHS.
The event was opened by David Lees, Workforce Development Manager for the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Workforce Development Team, followed by an address given by Jane Blower; the SHA Scientific Director for NHS East Midlands, Jane described the opportunities available in the NHS for scientists, and highlighted the life changing innovations that scientists have been responsible for, and the future opportunities for scientists across the UK to contribute to the wealth and growth of the economy, and health of the nation.

Anna Morenc, a trainee from Radiotherapy physics described her current training experience to the audience, and how rewarding a career in this field is.

Charlene Freeman, an embryologist, gave an enthusiastic account of how she had followed a career in reproductive science.

Darren Martin-Lamb, a physiologist, spoke on behalf of the physiological scientists and described the various career pathways, the type of diagnostics and interventions carried out in this division of healthcare science, including the potential for face to face patient contact.

The event included interactive and hands on demonstrations by local healthcare scientists working at UHL, there were competitions to match the chromosomes from the cytogeneticists, hand washing demonstrations using fluorescent gel to illustrate infection control, details of careers in microbiology, ultrasound scanning by the medical physicists, explanations about the role of the cardiac scientists, displays explaining the disease process of Malaria, including the opportunity to view sickle cells down the microscope.

Nerve Stimulation demonstrations by the neurophysiologists was a popular display, while the reproductive scientists used ‘The great egg and sperm race’ challenge to demonstrate the concentration and steady hands required by scientists.

De Montfort University were on hand to provide advice about the courses available.
Alyson Freeman, the MSC implementation lead who had been instrumental in organising the event, summarised the evening and future career prospects. Alyson explained the new science career structure, Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) and details of the new education courses were outlined, including how to prepare and apply for these new programmes. Alyson also described the career progression for healthcare scientists in the NHS including details of the salary that could be expected at each stage of the career ladder.

The evening ended with the speakers forming a panel to answer questions posed by the audience.

*Pictures copy write Mike Parsons*