

The Goodfellow Symposium hit the right spot

The recent Goodfellow Symposium held in partnership with MercyAscot on 12-13 April in Auckland attracted a splendid turnout from the primary health care sector. The popularity of the Symposium spoke for itself. The event was oversubscribed and registrations closed a week before the opening.

Around 530 people attended the multidisciplinary Symposium that had a really buzzy atmosphere. 377 delegates attended together with 64 speakers, 36 sponsors / exhibitors and others. Around 250 doctors and over 100 nurses were present.

Fiona Moir, the Programme Director, worked with her primary health care colleagues to put together workshop streams and themes appealing to general practitioners, primary health care nurses and pharmacists. A Self Care theme was adeptly balanced with more traditional evidence-based CME/CNE topics.

This truly was a multi-disciplinary event with doctors, nurses and pharmacists learning and laughing together. The camaraderie was infectious and the theme generated a very friendly atmosphere. One delegate commented "it's amazing, people are so friendly and open. I've never experienced a conference like this".

Speakers from Australia commented there were perhaps less opportunities to address Practitioner Wellbeing in New Zealand. The Goodfellow Unit has decided to start running Wellbeing Programmes for Health Practitioners with the first GP Wellbeing Programme taking place at the RNZCGP conference in July. Others will follow for nurses, pharmacists and others as the interest grows.

Delegates heard clinical updates on topics such as Heart Failure, Eye Problems in Primary Care and Anxiety. Many hands-on sessions had a practical focus for: examining knees, strapping ankles, looking into ears, suturing and role-plays for working with angry patients. Sessions were not specifically "for doctors" or "for nurses" so participants chose where they wanted to go, creating an atmosphere where it was safe to ask questions, or to admit to "not knowing". Due to the popularity of the practical sessions, the Goodfellow Unit and MercyAscot will jointly conduct a follow-up one-day workshop later in the year for the suturing and sports medicine sessions.

An Endorphin and Wellbeing Programme was weaved around the teaching sessions so delegates could select from meditation, laughter yoga, line dancing and free massages. Delegates commented on how it was "great to be together with primary health care colleagues", the "fun" atmosphere and how "well organised" the symposium was.

The exhibition area was packed with interesting displays and knowledgeable staff. Sponsors and exhibitors were delighted with the considerable interest from delegates who took advantage of the competitions with generous prizes on offer.

Planning is already underway for the 2009 symposium being held on 28 and 29 March at the same venue – Hyatt Regency, Auckland - and exhibitors are booking their stands so they won't miss out.