

**Information on Co-Cure 14 June 2002: Medical Research Council's plans for research: Briefing on the Medical Research Council's Strategy for Advancing Research into ME**

(Quote) "Following publication of the CMO's Working Group report on M.E. the Government asked the MRC to 'develop a broad strategy for advancing biomedical and health services research on chronic fatigue syndrome CFS/ME. Speaking at the APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group on ME) meeting, Dr Diana Dunstan, Director of the Research Management Group, said the Group comprised leading experts from various fields **who did not previously specialise in CFS/ME** because since this was "such a broad area it was felt important to get a wide range of specialities" and to have an **independent and fresh look** at the issue".

FACTS:

**Professor Alan McGregor** from Guy's, King's and St Thomas' Medical School (based at King's College) is hardly "independent" or a "fresh" mind on ME/CFS ---- he is listed as a "Member of the Linbury Advisory Panel on CFS" in the first Linbury Trust "Research Portfolio on Chronic Fatigue, edited by Robin Fox, published by the Royal Society of Medicine, London, July 1998. In the second Linbury Trust "Portfolio" on Chronic Fatigue published in 2000, Professor McGregor is still listed as "Member of the Linbury Trust Advisory Panel on CFS". In the book, it states that "The Linbury Trust...began funding research into chronic fatigue syndrome (*sic*) in 1991 and has since become the major source of funding in this disease area....Before the Linbury Trust initiative, much of the knowledge base in this area was erroneous".

Alan McGregor has also co-authored papers on "CFS" with Simon Wessely, for example

**"Contrasting neuroendocrine responses in depression and chronic fatigue syndrome"** Cleare AJ; Bearn J; Allain T; McGregor A; Wessely S, Murray RM, O'Keane V. Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, London, UK. *Journal of Affective Disorders* 1995; August 18:34: (4):283-289

**"Neuroendocrine Responses to d-Fenfluramine and Insulin-Induced Hypoglycaemia in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome"** Jenny Bearn; Theresa Allain; Patsy Coskeran, Neil Munro, Joan Butler, Alan McGregor and Simon Wessely. *Biol Psychiatry* 1995;37:245-252

**Professor Philip Cowen** from the Psychopharmacology Research Unit, Warneford Hospital, Oxford, has strong views on chronic fatigue syndrome and is co-author of a paper (with Professor Ray Dolan from the Wellcome Department of Cognitive Neurology, Institute of Neurology, University College, London) entitled "**Abnormalities of Mood**" which is published in the second Linbury Trust Portfolio ("**New research**

**ideas in Chronic Fatigue"** edited for The Linbury Trust by Richard Frackowiak and Simon Wessely, published by the RSM, London, 2000.

Philip Cowen has also co-authored papers with Michael Sharpe on CFS, for example "**Increased prolactin response to buspirone in chronic fatigue syndrome**" Sharpe M; Clements A; Hawton K; Young AH; Sargent P; Cowen PJ. *J Affect Disrd Nov 4 1996; 41: (1):71-76*

**It thus seems to be erroneous for the MRC spokesperson Dr Diana Dunstan to claim that the members of the panel are "independent" and "fresh" to the issue of ME/CFS. It would seem to be deliberate mis-information and thus misleading and untrue.**

**Why is there no neurologist, no neuro-radiologist and no vascular medicine specialist on this panel?**

**Professor Til Wykes** (who, as Simon Wessely, is from the Institute of Psychiatry, specialises in psychoses and is on record as believing about CBT that (quote) "If you encourage them to do things, as part of a treatment called cognitive behaviour therapy, then you do see improvement. It's a way of getting people to take control of their lives. It works, and it certainly shows that ours is not an aimless, ineffective science".