Obituary: Professor Jennifer Roberts (died 11 April 2014)

For those of us who have worked in infection control for many years, the name Jenny Roberts is synonymous with the economics of healthcare associated infection (HCAI). I first came across Jenny in her role as a collaborator in the groundbreaking Department of Health funded project – *The Socio-economic Burden of Hospital-acquired infection* – that defined the costs of HCAI and drew attention to their economic implications to both the NHS and society as a whole. The detailed information generated by this study still remains the main source of data on costs of HCAI in the UK today, influenced policy and underpinned all the highly influential National Audit Office reports as well as numerous other publications on this topic. Jenny acquired her PhD at the London School of Economics and joined the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 1974. It was during her career at LSHTM that she became a pioneer in the use of economics to analyse health and health care, a previously little studied topic. Jenny also took a keen interest in the economics of healthcare systems and the impact of changes that occurred in their organisation

following the adoption of market-style management. She established the Centre for the Economics of Infectious Disease and developed courses on health economics and the control of infectious disease. Not only did she play a pivotal role in defining the costs of HCAI but she also worked with others at the Health Protection Agency (as it was then) to examine the costs associated with other infections, in particular methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, gastrointestinal diseases, hepatitis and influenza. The book she edited, *The Economics of Infectious Disease* (Roberts, 2006), is essential reading for those interested in applying the methods and techniques of economics to the prevention and control of infectious disease. Despite her immense intellect, Jenny was never intimidating and hid her status as 'professor' well! She was a tremendously warm and engaging person who will be sadly missed by all those who worked with her.

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Reference

Roberts J. (2006) *The economics of infectious disease*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.