

## *Editorials*

### THE ORAL CONTRACEPTION STUDY

Planned parenthood is now accepted as a necessary prescription for responsible parenthood and the oral contraceptive the most reliable method of control of conception and the most acceptable aesthetically. It is important that we obtain as quickly as possible all the information we can about the other effects of continuous use of sex hormones taken in this way—I would say one of our most urgent tasks, since it affects so many women at an age when their responsibilities are greatest.

**W**ITH characteristic force and brevity, Sir Dugald Baird has epitomized in the above words the challenge and responsibility which now faces the College in launching its study of oral contraception.

At a meeting to be held later this month, representatives of each faculty of the College—we have called them the Faculty Coordinators for the study—will have the opportunity of hearing a detailed description of the investigation and discussing the practical problems of its implementation.

For more than two years the Oral Contraception Working Party has been planning the investigation and reducing to practical proportions what seemed, at first, an impossible task. It was found necessary to conduct and evaluate three independent pilot studies and to obtain much expert advice before a satisfactory scheme could be devised. As reported in the *March Journal*, the working party's efforts culminated in January in a major grant from the Medical Research Council to cover the very considerable cost of the study.

But this is only the beginning. Very shortly, every fellow, member and associate of the College will receive a personal invitation to be amongst those who initiate this great research project. Later, other general practitioners will be asked to participate, for this is not a task which can be left to the enthusiastic few. Every general practitioner, who is prepared to keep careful clinical records on a few patients, can contribute.

Oral contraception may well influence the whole range of morbidity—favourably or unfavourably—and will certainly result in

important changes in the behavioural patterns of society, its rate of growth, and perhaps its quality. An investigation of these trends must be a very serious responsibility, but the study has been designed so that the effort demanded is within the capability of any general practitioner who accepts this challenge.

The special structure of the National Health Service and the collective research experience of the College have presented to general practitioners in the United Kingdom this unique opportunity to evaluate one of the most important medicosocial revolutions of our time, and we must not fail in our task.

---

### REGISTER OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

In 1962 the Research Committee of The Royal College of General Practitioners compiled a register of research which was being undertaken in general practice. The purpose was two-fold. Experience had shown that much research was being carried out with little co-ordination between workers in any particular field, hence experience learned in one study might not be utilized another time. It was found that several projects were in progress at the same time on very similar subjects, but that owing to lack of co-ordination at the planning stage, the results were not comparable because different definitions and yardsticks of measurement had been employed.

At present there are 699 entries, of which 154 are of completed projects which are not to be published; 323 are of projects completed and being prepared for publication; 56 are projects in which either pilot or main study is proceeding and 26 studies are at the planning stage. The remainder are those which have been abandoned for various reasons at any stage and it is often from those with experience of unsuccessful projects that most helpful advice may be obtained.

This register depends for success upon being up to date in order to keep workers in similar fields in touch with one another, to the benefit of their work.

Information on research work at any stage from inception to completion is welcome for inclusion. Inquiries and information should be addressed to *Dr R. M. Griffiths, Honorary Registrar, The Research Committee of Council, The Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, London, S.W.7.*