

MARSDEN LECTURE

Sir,
In the Marsden Lecture 1974 (November *Journal*) Professor Byrne states he was a superb general practitioner for we are told that unlike the situation in North America and in the South of England today, "two colleagues followed his example in visiting such patients as were unable to attend the hospitals".

I would like to ask Professor Byrne, through you, sir, to expand on this remark. Is he making a distinction between general practitioners in the South of England and the North of England and if so, what evidence has he?

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REFERENCE

Byrne, P. S. (1975). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, 25, 785-92.

PREGNANCY TESTING KITS

Sir,
Further to Dr John's letter in the November *Journal* a request put to the District Medical Committee by a general-practitioner member of that committee that the hospital laboratory should supply pregnancy testing kits for use in general practitioners' surgeries to save the patient waiting for the result, and travelling to the laboratory, was summarily turned down by the pathologist as was a similar request for C.S.S.D. sterile packs for use for insertion of intra-uterine devices. However, in both cases the hospital laboratory would supply the equipment if the general practitioner paid for it.

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REFERENCE

John, A. P. K. (1975). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners* 25, 838.

HOURS ON CALL

Sir,

The letter from Dr I. Kerr (November *Journal*) highlights our weakness in the medical profession. That is, the assumption that it is normal and natural for all branches of the profession to work excessive hours. General practice, with its 168-hour commitment, hospital juniors frequently working beyond 80 hours per week, and senior hospital staff likewise all grossly exceed their contracted times. And all this is occurring at a time when the national average working week is dropping from 40 to 37 hours.

The State, as guardian of the public safety, prevents coach and truck drivers and airline pilots from exceeding safe limits, but in its capacity of a near monopoly employer of health-care staff, including doctors, it provides no such protection to the public.

The callousness of the State as an employer is perhaps compounded by the tendency of the medical profession to have a sort of feeling of the deity and to be therefore, exempt from fatigue, and each one of us personally indispensable at all times.

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REFERENCE

Kerr, I. D. (1975). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners* 25, 839.