

### Sterling research awards

In consultation with the Royal College of General Practitioners, hosts of the 11th WONCA Conference, Sterling Research Laboratories sponsored a travel award scheme in the form of an essay competition. Forty entries were received and the adjudicators were extremely impressed by the high standard of the submissions. The six prizes of £500, which will cover the registration fee for the conference and single hotel accommodation in London, have been won by:

Dr P.W. Barritt, Shrewsbury — 'The asthmatic child'

Dr M. Drucquer, Wigston, Leicestershire — 'The media, the patient and the doctor'

Dr A. Fuat, Stockton on Tees — 'Non-accidental injury: the role of the general practitioner'

Dr P. Gray, Whitehaven, Cumbria — 'The media, the patient and the doctor'

Dr J.F. Kinnon, Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire — 'Non-accidental injury: the role of the general practitioner'

Dr S. Street, Oxford — 'The relevance of the declaration of Alma-Ata to general practice in the United Kingdom.'

For further information: contact Mr N. Yeo, Sterling Research Laboratories, 0483 505515 or the Royal College of General Practitioners, 01-581 3232 ext 247.

### Health for 2000: changing primary care

A day-release development course has been organized for established urban general practitioners to provide the training necessary for general practitioners in dealing with the range of skills they need to practise effectively in urban settings. The course aims to develop the primary health care skills of general practitioners working in the urban environment, and areas covered will be epidemiology, management training, organization of health care, health economics, statistics, anthropology and social sciences.

The objectives of the course are to enable participants to describe the social and environmental characteristics of urban communities and their relationship to health care, specifically their practice population; to identify the needs of individuals and groups within the practice population; to organize the resources of the practice to respond appropriately to the needs identified; to encourage the patient and the practice community to develop responsibility for health and health care; to undertake relevant research based in the practice community; to establish priorities, draw up plans for and evaluate activities and policies within the practice; to work effectively in collaboration with other agencies relevant to primary health care and to influence the provisions and delivery of local primary care services. The course will be evaluated by assessing change in the practices of participating general practitioners.

The course has been funded by the DHSS and the NHS Training Authority with contributions from the Winthrop Foundation and the Lord Ashdown Charitable Settlement. There is no course fee and the course has Section 63 approval. The course will run over one year, in two terms, from October to December and from April to June 1987. Further details may be obtained from the Course Organizer, Dr Peter Sims, Senior Clinical Lecturer in Primary Care, General Practice Unit, University College, Chenies Mews, London WC1E 6JJ (Telephone 01-387 9300, extension 98/165).

### AIDS data base online

ROGER FARBEY

*RCGP Online Search Manager*

Scheduled for late Spring 1986 an AIDS online data base will be available via the host system Data-Star.

The AIDS data base is produced by the Bureau of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (which publishes *Abstracts on Hygiene and Communicable Diseases*). According to the Bureau's director, Mr David FitzSimons, they scan nearly 1100 journals on the subjects of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, human retroviruses (to include HTLV-I and HTLV-II) and some simian retroviruses. In common with other bibliographic data bases, the AIDS data base will include an accompanying abstract (they anticipate about 99% of references will carry an abstract). There are over 1000 citations already on the data base which dates back to 1984.

The Royal College of General Practitioners Online Search Service provides a means of accessing this and other important data bases such as MEDLINE and DHSS-DATA to those without the necessary computer and modem.

Search requests are accepted by telephone and in cases of urgency the results should arrive by post the next working day. Contact the Online Search Manager at 14 Princes Gate, London, SW7 1PU (Telephone 01-581 3232, extension 254) for details.

### Optimizing health care for patients with chronic and disabling conditions

The care of patients with chronic and potentially disabling conditions is one of the main research interests of the Aldermoor group practice in Southampton, which incorporates the Medical School's Department of Primary Medical Care. The main focus of recent research in this field has been on exploring methods of improving the care for patients with asthma, diabetes and hypertension. One of the principal aims of the group's activities is to extend the role of the practice nurse and involve a range of practices in the Southampton district in developing extended primary care management for patients with the above conditions. The Department of Primary Medical Care has recently received a total of £125 000 from the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust and the Asthma Research Council to appoint a Research Fellow and two Research Nurses to continue these projects over the next three years. These research funds are obtained as a result of close collaboration with local general practitioners, the Hampshire Local Medical Committee and the Wessex Faculty of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

### Information on visual handicap for physiotherapists

The Disabled Living Foundation recently secured finance to produce an information and training resource on visual handicap designed for use in physiotherapy, both for students and for in-service training of qualified professionals. A multidisciplinary steering group has been set up to research this project and appoint a project worker.

Physiotherapists, whether working in hospital or in the community, belong to a profession where visually handicapped people are met in the ordinary course of their work, presenting problems both in treatment and in mobility. Much physiotherapy treatment requires a degree of visual competence in the patient, as teaching of exercises includes demonstrations. Again some exercises are normally done in front of a mirror so that patients

can check their own performance. If the patient cannot see sufficiently well, then other methods are needed. As well as appropriateness of teaching method, further aspects are important, such as safety and the layout of the physiotherapy area. It appears that the input in professional training is sparse on all these special needs.

The number of registered visually handicapped people is steadily increasing. Moreover it is well known that the registers only include a small proportion of those who could be registered if they wished. It is among elderly people that the majority of visually handicapped people are found and the percentage of elderly people in the population is growing fast. It seems that a training/information package designed to meet the needs of physiotherapists who treat visually handicapped people will fill a gap in professional resources and is urgently needed.

The Disabled Living Foundation would be grateful for any comments, problems, solutions, or other relevant information from either physiotherapists or from visually handicapped people together with those involved in their care or in the care of the elderly. Please write to: The Visual Handicap Adviser, Disabled Living Foundation, 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU. Telephone: 01-289 6111.

## National development of video-programmes for patient education

The Forth Valley Health Board, with funding support from the Scottish Health Education Group, is developing, evaluating and assessing the use of patient education videoprogrammes in Scottish health boards over a period of four to five years.

Since 1974 Forth Valley Health Board have produced 10 videoprogrammes for use in patient education. Topics include leg ulcers, vasectomy, injecting insulin, sleep, diabetes, back troubles, constipation, infant feeding, care of the sick child at home and asthma in childhood.

Further details about the videos may be obtained from Dr C. McEwan, Forth Valley Health Board, 33 Spittal Street, Stirling FK8 1DX.

## James Mackenzie Prize 1986

The James Mackenzie Prize is awarded every five years to a general practitioner in the British Commonwealth who has published or undertaken valuable work during the previous five years, the intention being to reward good clinical work, and particularly good research work, carried out in general practice. The trustees are now willing to consider the names of suitable candidates for this prize. Candidates should submit copies of their published work, or a clear and concise account of the work which has been undertaken by them and on which they wish to be judged, in a form that is suitable and ready for publication to the Chairman of the Awards Committee, Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, London SW7 1PU, not later than 31 August 1986.

The amount of the prize for the 1986 Award will be £2500.

## New chairman for Health Education Advisory Committee for Wales

Dr Simon Smail, a Fellow of the Royal College of General Practitioners, is to succeed Mr Norman Whitehouse as chairman of the Health Education Advisory Committee for Wales and also as the Welsh representative on the Health Education Council (HEC).

Dr Smail is a senior lecturer in general practice at the University of Wales College of Medicine and lives in Cardiff. He has

represented general practitioners' interests on the HEC since 1980, and is currently chairman of its Coronary Prevention Planning Group. He is also chairman of the HEC Working Party for Health Education in General Practice and has been an active member of the Advisory Committee since its establishment in April 1984.

Some of the major issues facing the Committee which Dr Smail has outlined are the analysis of the responses to its report on dealing with alcohol related problems in Wales, discussion of the work of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome subgroup and the establishment of a working group on the health education needs for cancer screening.

## Erratum

The April issue of the *Journal* contained a report on the first of the new management appreciation courses being run at the College. It was erroneously stated that these courses were organized jointly by the RCGP and the King's Fund. The courses are, in fact, run solely by the RCGP.

## DIARY DATES

### Residential weekend course in group analysis

The North London Centre for Group Therapy is holding a course for anyone with an interest in group dynamics wanting to experience the group-analytic approach. This will be an international weekend course with small and large group discussions from Friday 18 July to Sunday 20 July at the North London Centre for Group Therapy in London. The fee will be £135.

Enquiries should be made to the Secretary, North London Centre for Group Therapy, Priory Close, Southgate, London N14 4AW (Telephone 01-440 1451).

### Motherhood and mental illness

The provisional programme has been drawn up for a conference which aims to advance the understanding, prevention and treatment of mental illness related to child-bearing. Sessions will include clinical aetiological aspects of postnatal mental illness; the detection and prevention of postnatal depression; biological aspects of the puerperium; education and training; and the place of voluntary and self-help groups.

Those wishing to attend should contact the Marcé Society Secretariat, Bell Howe Conferences, Kingsley House, 104 Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7JH. The conference will take place at the Queen's Medical Centre, University of Nottingham, on 27-29 August 1986.

### An introduction to training

A residential course has been organized for general practitioners intending to become trainers in the Northern Region. This course will also be of interest to partners of intending trainers and to partners in existing training practices. The aim is to introduce general practitioners to the objects of training and some of the methods used. Work will take place mainly in small groups.

The course will be held at Collingwood College, Durham, on 26-28 September 1986 at a cost of approximately £40.00 for full-board. Applications should be made to Mrs O. Thompson, Regional Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and Dentistry, 11 Framlington Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4AB (Telephone 091-232 8511). The closing date for applications is 14 July 1986.