

The Ileostomy. Recording by MR NEVILLE STIDOLPH and members of the *Ileostomy Association*. The College Medical Recording Service and Sound Library.

A clear account of the problems associated with an ileostomy is followed by the recorded statements of two patients. The whole is presented with full details in a way that inspires confidence. Any doctor or patient who finds ileostomy management difficult should hear this recording. It will be to their comfort. Technically the recording is up to the high standard usual from *Kitts Croft*.

Correspondence

Notes

Sir,

Dr Gibben's article (*J. Coll. gen. Practit.* 1965, 10, 217) is excellent and we should try to attain the same level of lucidity, with perhaps one exception. His recommendation of the use of the word 'fit' to imply return to health is not one to be followed, for, in the records of an epileptic or a woman with pre-eclamptic toxæmia, it could easily be understood to mean a convulsion. If it is intended to note the issue of a final N.H.S. certificate the letter 'F' in the column adjacent to the date is much better.

Nantwich.

F. W. BLACKLAY.

The Crutch Syndrome

Sir,

No diagnostic computer or statistical survey is necessary to demonstrate the increasing incidence of what I call the 'crutch' syndrome. This widespread pathological dependence on hypnotics and tranquillizers is surely as sad a reflection on the doctors who consistently prescribe them as it is a telling indication of the need for increased social and welfare services. For those unfortunate people, who reject realistic solutions to their problems and who can neither afford nor tolerate other potential drugs of addiction like alcohol and nicotine to assuage their functional disorders, the hypnotic drug has become the fashionable 'crutch'.

Surely it is up to our profession to realize the alarming extent to which we aid our patients in becoming addicted to hypnotics. Should we not endeavour to wean them by all means possible?

This would ultimately benefit vast numbers of people, reduce the soaring drug costs of the N.H.S. by millions, and enable more doctors to practice better medicine. Should there not also therefore be a determined campaign, by means of individual education and national appeal, to convince doctors and patients alike that treatment of the 'crutch' syndrome should not primarily consist of hypnotics, sedatives and tranquillizers?

Bournemouth.

GABRIEL JAFFE.