

of work, and therefore in the best interests of patient and doctor. If we are to unthink past habits and rethink future organization, we should surely do so from the basic principles of what is required, rather than from blind acceptance of the *status quo*. Dr McKendrick and I (though not alone) have both had our eyes opened to the facts that things are not always what we think they are, nor always why we thought they were. I hope the National Health Service may yet be changed to embrace some of the better features of Antipodean medicine, while avoiding any dangers inherent in either system.

Callington
Cornwall.

F. H. STAINES.

A study of the doctor-patient relationship

Sir,

Your article *A study of the doctor-patient relationship* in the March 1967 edition of the *Journal* has inspired me to write this letter, adding my own humble contribution, in case it may be of value to doctors who wish to treat their patients in an enlightened manner.

It has been my experience as a cancer patient to have the personality faults of a doctor ruthlessly projected on to the patient, taking the form of nagging and bullying. Common sense is the first and foremost requirement sought for in the doctor by the patient, whether it is expressed thus or not. For instance, a car-owner would not expect a medical prescription from a petrol attendant, any more than a patient would expect his doctor to try to sell him petrol!

Let the doctor do his job, the whole job and nothing but the job. This would be quite a refreshing change. Anything extra, in the way of philosophy, etc., is the patient's own concern, as it ought to be. The mere fact that the patient is silent about his philosophy, while the doctor, often sentimental, is over-demonstrative about his own philosophy, does not mean that the doctor should impose his philosophy, unwanted, unasked, upon the patient. More often than not the patient is better off without it, only too polite or too weak to say so.

Thank you for a most interesting *Journal*.

Muizenberg,
Cape Province.

KATHLEEN IANDA LEON.

Abortion, a general practitioner's point of view

Sir,

It is our opinion that Dr Sluglett's article *Abortion, a general practitioner's point of view*, published in the May edition of the *Journal* should not go unchallenged. Although it would be necessary to write at length