

14, 5) gives a definition of his subject: which definition is an almost exact paraphrase of that given by the Oxford Dictionary—for endemiology. And this, of course, is what we mean. Lung-cancer, accidents, mental disease, coronary artery disease, pernicious anaemia etc., are always endemic and frequently pandemic, but never, by definition, epidemic.

Endemics may wax or wane, certainly, but if words mean anything at all, an endemic can never become an epidemic. It may reach 'epidemic proportions', but it is still an endemic writ large.

Is it too late to give this subject its correct name?

Cheltenham.

J. MILES.

Getting to know the patient

Sir,

Surely the real specialist in early diagnosis in *that particular family* is usually the mother. Your editorials of July are too modest both about the tremendous effort needed to stem any tide of opinion, and about how the College has met this challenge with so few men and resources. But hardly so far has there been time for younger members, often still associates, to improve the business efficiency in the practices they join. A strong lead is now needed from the publications of the College on how best to get to know the patients on first joining the practice, and then, continually, how best to get to know new and old ones better. This subject covers the whole field of communication, both between doctors themselves, doctors and patients, and even between members of the community, whether ill or not, on health matters.

The best example of the problem to be faced is the patient's record folder. When will we get down to sorting this out?

St. Albans.

M. J. JAMESON.

Coloured tags on record cards for important diseases

Sir,

In this practice we are following your recommendations of colour tagging important diseases, but find that locally we need extra tags as there is a lot of chest disease here. We therefore are tagging this (and "other heart disease") on the left hand side of the card. We use a brown tag for bronchitis and blue (as you suggest on the right for hypertension) for any other heart condition. We adopted this for our own convenience, and use the right-hand side for your (we hope country-wide) recommendations.

Hull.

DAVID FULLERTON.
