

REPORTS

REPORT OF A CONFERENCE ON EXAMINATION

On 4 and 5 March, 1970, at 14 Princes Gate, a two-day conference on the examination for MRCGP discussed the present examination, considered the methods, and the development of the examination.

Members of the Board of Censors, the Panel of Examiners, the Vocational Training Subcommittee's 'Fourth Report' Working Party, and the officers of Council attended. Papers had been pre-circulated on the content of general practice by Dr C. M. Harris, the modified essay question by Dr K. Hodgkin, the multiple choice question by Dr P. S. Byrne, the traditional essay by Dr J. D. E. Knox, the oral by Dr P. S. Byrne, The present position; organization by Dr J. D. E. Knox, possible developments; log diary medical audit by Dr E. V. Kuenssberg, continuous assessment by Dr P. S. Byrne and other techniques by Dr P. Freeling.

On the last afternoon three working groups discussed the identification of areas not covered or explored in our examination (convenor Dr C. M. Harris), weightings of sections; basic rules for pass or fail (convenor Dr W. Gardner) and logistics cost and organization (convenor Dr J. F. Burdon).

Decisions were taken which should result in the format of the examination being:

PART I

1. A multiple choice question paper.
2. A modified essay question paper.
3. A traditional essay paper.

This portion of the examination is to be held in the five centres of London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Cardiff, and Dublin, and will be followed by:

PART II

An oral examination of these parts, each of one half-hour.

1. An examination based on actual case records provided by the examiners, which will seek to test problem-solving and patient management.
2. A portion of the oral structured on a Log Diary composed by the candidate.
3. An examination in which the use of various instruments, procedures, forms etc., relevant to general practice, will also be tested.

The MCQ paper testing factual recall covers a wide range of topics and for the examination to be held in May 1970, the table of specifications is as follows:

<i>Group</i>	<i>No. of questions</i>
Psychiatry	36
Paediatrics	24
Medicine	40
Therapeutics	24
Obstetrics and gynaecology	24
Infectious diseases	16
E.N.T., dermatology and ophthalmics	16
Surgical	20
Social medicine	20
Total	220

The experimental work by which this list was created is to be published (Byrne and Freeman). Care will be taken in future to see that this MCQ paper examines in the areas I to V described in the short report on educational needs in the *College Journal* of December 1969 (Vol. 18, No. 89, p. 358) which will be detailed in the full 'Fourth Report'. Social Medicine includes some practice organization and Health Service regulations.

The MEQ, in its developing form requires problem-solving and management skills from the candidate, as well as factual recall, and is used also to demonstrate attitudes. This type of

question is being developed by Dr Keith Hodgkin and a group of colleagues from an original idea of the New Zealand Council. An ingenious marking system is also being developed. This type of question has advantages over the vastly more expensive U.S.A. 'erasure' type of patient-management problem.

The *Log Diary* is a structured diary provided by the Board of Censors to each candidate and received by the examiners one week before the examination. It is being developed by Dr Kuenssberg and Professor Knox. It affords a broad profile of the candidate and what he describes himself as doing in his practice. It serves as a base from which each pair of examiners may conduct a portion of the oral examination. A uniform rating scale is being used by each examiner in the oral examination.

Much time was spent on the question of Progressive Assessment. Experiments being undertaken in the University of Manchester are to be extended.

The examiners 'sat' the papers for the May examination for MRCGP. Other matters discussed included the logistics of the examination, technical points of pass level and the ground rules for pass or failure. An examiners' meeting is to be held immediately after the oral examination when the results will be discussed and agreed.

P. S. BYRNE

PRACTICE ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

In most areas, practice organization has been tested by the influenza epidemic. It would be interesting if the committee could receive reports on how far the helter skelter flood tide swamped the practice resources, or how far the organized calm and resourcefulness encouraging patient co-operation was achieved. An appropriate quote from a practice in a severely struck area states 'Thanks to the Team, we are managing.'

The study of the Team approach to general practice work is proceeding, the committee being involved at the moment in a Study Group with the Medical Officers of Health Association, the Health Visitors Association and the Royal College of Nursing. We hope to produce further publications on this subject during 1970.

A most successful conference was held at the College on 4 December 1969 when over 100 representatives from the faculties discussed group practice, its motivation, organization, administration and scope. This self-analytical meeting was chaired by Dr J. E. Struthers, PMO, Department of Health and Social Security. Dr J. S. Clark of the Prospect House Medical Group, Newcastle upon Tyne introduced the subject of the conference, who challenged the thinking on size of groups and posed the need for a basic small unit.

Some first rate papers, circulated prior to the conference, under such titles as 'commissioning and financing a group', 'records and confidential record handling', 'equipment', 'design of premises', 'scope of ancillary staff', 'operational analysis', gave rise to wide-ranging, helpful discussion. Only by such critical appraisal by those who are involved in the day-to-day work shall we learn about our mistakes and successes. We hope to publish the proceedings of this conference.

Another line of approach is being conducted by Dr Riddsel-Smith on behalf of the committee. He is collecting analytical questionnaires and photographs of 'organized' practices to establish a 'Practices Book'. This collection of practice descriptions and illustrations of how organization is being instituted in various practices will be available for reference in the POC Room at the College. Several of the more outstanding practices with some novel feature or