

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

building will also be displayed on the exhibition tables. Those invited by Dr Riddsel-Smith to complete his questionnaire and supply photographs are asked to give him their fullest co-operation to ensure the success of this venture.

We hope to produce a standard publication on developing projects based on collective information on various organizational features which can be kept up to date section by section.

E. V. KUENSSBERG.

FACULTY REPORT

SYMPOSIUM ON 'ALLERGY'

On Sunday, 7 December 1969, a symposium on 'Allergy' was held in Cardiff, at the Department of Anatomy, University College, by the South-east Wales Faculty. There was an audience of over one hundred.

The meeting was opened by Dr J. N. M. PARRY, provost of the faculty who welcomed the audience and speakers, and introduced the chairman. Dr D. A. WILLIAMS then started the meeting by introducing the speakers in order of appearance. In addition to welcoming them, he gave an apt thumbnail sketch of each one.

The first paper was by Dr B. H. BASS, consultant physician and consultant in clinical respiratory physiology at Dudley Road Hospital, Birmingham, on *Lung function studies*. He gave a clear and concise review of the basic physiological principles and then went on to describe the tests used in the study of lung function. He gave the normal values expected from each test, and showed how these were altered by various respiratory malfunctions, with special reference to asthma and farmers' lung, as two differing types of allergic lung disease.

Dr J. D. WILLIAMS, consultant pathologist at Dudley Road Hospital, Birmingham, the second speaker, took as his subject *The rôle of house mites*. After introducing his star, *Dermatophagoides pteryissinus*, Dr Williams gave a resumé of the experimental work that had incriminated mites in the propagation of allergic asthma. The immunological response was of the reaginic antibody type, akin to pollen asthma and hay fever. The eight-legged animals were found in large numbers in house dust, especially from mattresses; they lived on dermal sheddings, but were not found in hospital dust, nor above 2,000 feet. In a high percentage of asthmatic children skin testing to mite antibodies was positive, and removing the child from its infested home dramatically reduced the incidence of asthma attacks. Dr Williams' paper reviewed the work being done on this problem.

He was followed by Mr. K. G. MALCOLMSON, consultant ear, nose and throat surgeon, United Bristol Hospitals. His paper *Hay fever* was concerned with allergic rhinitis. Mr Malcolmson contended that the nasal obstruction was almost entirely due to congestion of the mucosa over the anterior part of the inferior turbinate. After a skilful exposition of the anatomy and autonomic nerve pathways, he described neurophysiological experiments and clinical material in support of his hypothesis. The surgical treatment consisted in cautery of the inferior turbinate; in more persistent cases crushing or section of the Vidian nerve may be required. In atrophic rhinitis, cervical sympathectomy was resorted to. A sophisticated series of experiments was described, showing how selective interference with the sympathetic or parasympathetic pathways, altered the response of the nasal mucous membrane to decongestants and anti-allergy drugs.

Dr A. HOLZEL, reader in child health, University of Manchester, who took as his subject *Respiratory allergies in childhood*, said that paediatrics was essentially general medicine, but