

role. The unseemly wrangles which opposing 'expert' opinions display in the courts attract sensational press coverage and it is the whole medical profession which reaps the harvest of bad press and public distaste. As witness the newly released film *Family Life*.

I wish to warn the medical profession against any attempt that Parliament might make to incorporate the new profession of psychotherapy into the profession of medicine.

Sir John Foster's recommendations are very wise and far seeing and very explicit. Psychotherapy has historically been the responsibility of the Church, it has slipped by default onto the shoulders of the doctor, it is not our responsibility nor do most of us want that responsibility. It is not what we were trained to do. The decline of the established churches threatens to land the doctor with the function of the father confessor, priest and confidant. The medical practitioner is a scientist trained to diagnose and treat illness.

For the medical profession to become embroiled in the forthcoming controversy as to what will constitute proper training to become a professional psychotherapist can only lead to disaffection of the

public. It could become the last straw that broke the profession's back and totally undermines the status it still retains.

A strong independent profession of psychotherapists who do not have to be doctors is essential to our modern culture. They are needed in our society as an independent profession, just as the dental profession is essential and independent of the doctor.

Psychotherapy is a specialised subject on its own, needing as Sir John says, its own special code of ethics, its own special standards. The establishment of a separate strong and independent profession is urgently needed and it will reflect well upon both professions that we firmly insist on the implementations of Sir John's recommendations.

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#### REFERENCE

Foster, Sir John (1971). *Enquiry into the practice and effects of scientology*, London: H.M.S.O.

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## Obituary

### David Arnold Riley

M.B., B.S., M.R.C.G.P.

David Arnold Riley who died on 22 January, 1972 at his home in Luton at the age of 44 was born in Yorkshire. Having been educated at University College School and the Middlesex Hospital, he graduated M.B., B.S., London in 1951. Shortly after qualification, he joined the Royal Air Force Medical Service from which he retired with the rank of Squadron Leader.

On his return to civilian life he decided that his future lay in family medicine, he gained further experience in obstetrics and general practice in and around Hereford.

In 1956, he joined a growing partnership in Luton where his unbounded energy and enthusiasm soon came to be appreciated by his colleagues and patients. His interest and skill in obstetrics led to his appointment as clinical assistant in the obstetric department of the Luton and Dunstable Hospital and contributed greatly to the development of very close co-operation between general practitioners and midwives in the area in which he practised.

In 1969, owing to the premature retirement

of his two senior partners, he found himself the leader of a large group practice, a responsibility which he shouldered with the same determination he had demonstrated earlier. Unfortunately ill health soon overtook him, in spite of which he continued to carry out his professional duties with scarcely diminished vigour until shortly before his death.

David displayed in his family life the same courage and dedication which characterised his attitude towards his profession. For many years he encouraged and supported his first wife Mary Tanner during the long and distressing illness which first became manifest soon after they had settled in Luton.

A loyal supporter of the British Medical Association, he served for several years as honorary secretary of the South Bedfordshire division and his capacity for leadership and imaginative thinking had free rein. He was a member of the Royal College of General Practitioners and served on the Board of the Northern Home Counties Faculty of the College.

He is survived by his wife Shirley and his two daughters to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

J.G.R.C.