

Both these routes are extremely hard, indeed excessively so. General practice today is generating such a veritable plethora of outstanding individuals that if no other opportunities were available, their talents could not be fully stretched: moreover, the need for general practice thinking in many universities would remain unmet.

The College has now identified these needs and moved to meet them. A third group of visiting professorships has been created by the announcement in 1972 of two new developments. In each case the College has negotiated generous financial support and will itself participate in the appointing process.

The Sir Harry Jephcott Visiting Professorships are appropriately called after a great friend and honorary Fellow of the College. Their creation represents a feather in the caps of the Chairman of the Research Foundation Board, Dame Annis Gillie, and the officers of Council. These new professorships will be available to any medical school in the United Kingdom prepared to apply, and will be appointed by a committee including a representative of the university concerned, the College and its appropriate foundation boards. Finance of up to £1,000 each is already available.

The Wolfson Foundation Visiting Professorships were also announced this year. These are different, are specifically for overseas, and will normally last from four to six weeks. Appointments will be restricted to Fellows and members of the Royal College of General Practitioners in the United Kingdom and Eire who are active in general practice. The appointing committee will consist of those holding office at the time as President of the College, and the Chairmen of the Research and Education Foundation Boards. One such professorship will be available this year and another next year. Financial support of up to £5,000 is again already available.

What will these professors do? Among the topics common to both the Sir Harry Jephcott and Wolfson Foundation Professorships is the education of medical students in general practice. It is expected that they will also stimulate the postgraduate vocational training of intended general practitioners and the continuing education of those already in practice.

Visiting professorships in other branches of medicine have long been common and their introduction to general practice is greatly to be welcomed. It is likely that the first appointments of the Sir Harry Jephcott and Wolfson Foundation Professorships will be made this year. The work of these practitioners and their subsequent reports will be studied all over the world.

TWO MILLION POUNDS

THE college appeal was launched in London on 25 May, 1972 with a target of two million pounds. This month a second wave of activity is spreading throughout the country, through the network of the Faculties.

The last appeal was launched in November 1959 and had a target of one million pounds. Why another appeal? Why two million pounds? These are the critical questions and the President and the Chairman of the appeal committee seek to answer them in brochures that are now available. These have been designed to explain to lay men and women the objectives of the College and to outline the need for further money.

In summary, the aim is to improve the care the patients receive from general practitioners by increasing the quality and quantity of general practitioner research and education.

Research

Research work carried out by general practitioners in the community has a long and distinguished history. The College has already achieved much both through single and multi-practice studies.

In the words of the 1959 appeal "more than half a century of advances in medicine have been based on experimental science, while observational research has been comparatively neglected. Emphasis has been laid on man's structure and his behaviour in the artificial surroundings of hospital and laboratory. Little has been learned of the influence of living and working conditions on the health of his mind and body. . . . General practice has thus become a growing point of medical research which can no longer be nourished and sustained by voluntary effort alone."

The Research Foundation Board, chaired by Dame Annis Gillie, herself a former President and Chairman of Council, already does much to support financially the projects that are brought before it. It has been, and will continue to be, particularly interested in promoting research on the prevention of disease and is thus aimed at earlier and better diagnosis. Early diagnosis is the hallmark of the primary physician, and thus the special province of general practice. It is intended to use appeal money to take full advantage of local initiative in research programmes and to provide a more professional approach than could be afforded in the past by the appointment of at least ten research fellowships.

Education

The other main endowment fund is in the educational field and is administered by the Education Foundation Board. This is chaired by Lord Rosenheim, the immediate past President of the Royal College of Physicians and Chairman of the Medicines Commission.

As with research the College has achieved much since the last appeal. Indeed more has occurred in education in general practice in the last ten years than in the previous hundred. For the future, it is intended to expand further the educational programmes for both young and established practitioners so that every medical graduate wishing to enter general practice can receive an appropriate educational programme as good as that in any other discipline.

The College was founded on an academic basis. The criteria for membership both in the past and present involved a commitment to continuing education. The College has much still to do in defining more clearly the educational needs of general practitioners in practice and the ways in which these needs can best be met.

Raising the money

These are the objectives. The College has been fortunate in receiving encouragement and support from a distinguished list of sponsors (*see* College news). All that now remains is the provision of the financial oil which will alone make the wheels go round.

The appeal is not directed primarily at college members, although contributions from them, large or small, will be welcome. The appeal is directed at doctors and lay men and women who are friends of general practice and who believe in these objectives. It is for this reason that although so much work has been done at college headquarters the ultimate success of the appeal will depend on the Faculties and their members. Only if the Faculties take their task to heart will such an immense sum be achieved. If they all do, then the endowment funds will benefit by two million pounds.