

MORBIDITY STATISTICS IN GENERAL PRACTICE

LIKE the first National Morbidity Survey carried out in 1955–56, the second was a truly joint enterprise carried out by the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, the latterday equivalent of the General Register Office. With financial backing from the Department of Health and Social Security the second survey began in November 1971 and, in modified form, is still continuing. In the first survey over 100 practices took part, in the second the number was halved, but because of changes in the pattern of practice particularly towards groups and partnerships, the number of doctors was much the same.

In March 1973 the joint working party produced the first in the series of reports which will appear as the various computer analyses are complete. This report gives an account of the methods used in the survey, describing the preliminary planning and the testing of methods as well as the conduct of the study. In an appendix to the report there is a schedule of the tabulations which are to appear in later volumes.

This report is both interesting and informative. Its interest is not limited to those who may be planning national surveys of morbidity—though these will find it invaluable—but anyone with planning responsibility will find it a useful guide to the handling of sickness data, and an indication of the information that is to become available.

While a number of copies of this report have been reserved for enquirers from countries overseas, copies can be obtained, at no cost, from either the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys at Somerset House or the Research Unit of the Royal College of General Practitioners at Newland House, 139 Hagley Road, Birmingham, B16 8UA.

GENERAL-PRACTITIONER PUBLICATIONS

FOR many years the news section of the *Journal* has contained a list of articles, papers, and more recently books, written by general practitioners. Printed at different times under different headings, the purpose was to record the rising tide of general-practitioner writing, to list the topics currently attracting attention, and to provide an information service for the *Journal's* readers.

This list has been growing longer and in 1973 for the first time it has begun to fill a whole page. As the explosion of authorship in general practice all over the world is obviously continuing, it is probable that future lists will be longer still.

The number of journal pages is fixed, and if these lists are to occupy about 12 pages a year they will either take up space equivalent to two or three articles a year, or alternatively replace more letters, book reviews, and news.

As the majority of articles now submitted for publication are not accepted, and as the pressure on space is becoming ever more intense, it seems right to review regularly each section of the *Journal*.

Do the *Journal's* readers value these lists? How often are they read, for what purpose, and by whom? Could the space be better used—and if so how? Would a list of general-practitioner publications maintained in the college library (the librarian already compiles the lists) and sent to all enquirers, be a satisfactory alternative?

We invite comments and this section of the *Journal* will be maintained, modified or dropped according to the majority view of readers' letters.