

A ledger method of morbidity recording

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The last two years of data recording for the national morbidity survey, with possession of an up-to-date age-sex register has prompted the maintenance of a practice recording system for all patient-doctor interviews.

The original 'L' book was designed by H. N. Levitt but was found to be cumbersome. The modification suggested here is not original, but with the age-sex register it does record enough data for serious study of morbidity, and it can also be used as an appointment book, visiting list or diary. This is the simplest basis of a permanent practice record, and from it data can be removed to an 'E' book or to a 'W' book if desired.

The ledger itself is a 'Twinlock' loose-leaf binder no IC. Each sheet is horizontally arranged and measures 21 cm by 12.7 cm. The front is for recording data for males, and the reverse for females (figure 1).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
0	0	2	0	3	3	8

DR. CODE

0

 (MALE)

DATE

8 — 9	10 — 11	21— 22

I.T.	E.T.	SURNAME					FORENAME		d.b.				REMARKS	C	C	DIAG CODE				
		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33				34	35	36	37	38
1																				
2																				
3																				
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Method

The code number identifying the doctor is the first item to be recorded at the top left hand of each sheet (boxes 1-7). The date of the use of each sheet is entered in the boxes at the top right hand corner of the page boxes (8-22). Below these boxes essential data are entered in one line for each patient up to a total of 18 for each sex per sheet.

Each horizontal line is completed appropriately and the type of episode is entered first (box 24).

Recording is made on a quarterly basis in my practice, and the episode type (E.T.) is entered as either 1, 2 or 0. '1' refers to any illness or episode, either acute, chronic or recurring which has been noted in any previous recording quarter. '2' refers to a new illness or episode whether seen in the surgery or on a visit or referred from a doctor elsewhere. '0' refers to an illness already designated as 1 or 2 in the current quarter.

Particulars are then inserted by which the patient is identified. The first three letters of the patient's surname are entered (boxes 25, 26 and 27) and then the first letter of the first forename (box 28). To these are added the full date of the patient's birth expressed in the conventional British way, i.e. day, month and year (boxes 29-34).

The two columns headed by 'C' are for consultations and referrals. In the first column marked 'C' (box 35) is entered either S for consultation in the surgery, or V for home visit. In the second column marked 'C' (box 36) recording is made of referrals. If no referral is made, 0 is entered. If an inpatient referral occurs i.e. admission to hospital, 1 is inserted. If an outpatient or casualty referral is made, 2 is entered. Where the outcome of an episode is death, a D is entered in this column.

The next three columns are used for recording the disease label (boxes 37, 38 and 39). In this system, the Royal College of General Practitioners' Classification is used in the latest form. This classification of morbidity is a short list of the International Classification of Diseases and Causes of Death based on the frequency of occurrence of diseases in general practice in Britain.

The final column (box 40) is used in my practice where it is necessary to enter the episode into a W book.

In use, the sheet is placed on my desk by my receptionist who has already entered the names of the patients to be seen before the surgery begins. All that remains to be done is enter the diagnostic code, and referral if any.

If any particular research project is considered, it is easy to add further columns at the expenses of the 'remarks' area for recording coded material.

Acknowledgement

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SPRING GENERAL MEETING 1974

The Wessex Faculty will be hosts at the Spring General Meeting of the College and a symposium on *Oncology and rehabilitation* to be held at Southampton General Hospital from Friday 19 April to Sunday 21 April 1974.

There will be a civic reception on Friday and a faculty reception and dinner on Saturday. A social programme will be arranged for Saturday and Sunday in Southampton and the New Forest.

The Spring General Meeting will be on Sunday and Professor Marshall Marinker will give the 1974 William Pickles Lecture on *New themes in education*.