

Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners, August 1972.

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HAMPSHIRE POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL CENTRE

General-practitioner refresher courses will be held on 16-17 November 1974 and 30 November-1 December 1974. Applications should be made to The Secretary, Postgraduate Medical Centre, Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Romsey Road, Winchester, Hampshire.

CORRECTIONS

In the April issue of the *Journal* the list of new members read: Marcham, P. H. L., Abingdon, Berkshire and should have read: Tate, P. H. L., Marcham, nr Abingdon, Berkshire.

Figure three on page 343 of the May *Journal* contains a transposition error. Patients numbered 323, 330, 350, 356, 371, 374 and 380 should have been included in the group where effective health deteriorated.

REFERENCE

Williams, E. I. (1974). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, 24, 341-346.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE HANDEDNESS OF KERRS

Sir,

Do the authors on the paper on left-handedness in the Kerr family (June *Journal*) wish to make statements about the Kerr family, or the methods that they used for investigating left-handedness in the Kerr family? Any conclusions that they make about left-handedness in the Kerr family must be made knowing that there is likely to have been a large bias introduced by the method of the survey. This was clearly stated in the paper.

Until evidence can be produced that the group of the Kerr family that responded by providing information is similar to the rest of the Kerr family that did not, the only reasonable conclusions that can be drawn from the material available is that there is an excess of left-handed Kerrs among those who responded to the appeal for information about left handedness in the Kerr family.

If the authors are to undertake further studies of this nature they must surely realise that they must make some effort to check on the bias that their sampling method introduces.

G. KEELE

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Manchester M13 0FW.

REFERENCE

Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners (1974). 24, 437-9.

ANCILLARY STAFF

Sir,

I have read, with much interest, the report by Dr Ronald Mulroy (May *Journal*) on *Ancillary staff in general practice*, and I suggest that the facts revealed by the Wakefield symposium questionnaire do not reflect much credit on the average

general practitioner—either as a manager of his own affairs or as a humanitarian employer.

The ever-increasing clinical workload of the general practitioner makes it of paramount importance that all non-clinical work should be delegated to properly-trained staff—with the emphasis on 'properly-trained.'

The Association of Medical Secretaries has as its two basic objects the establishment and maintenance of a high standard among medical secretaries and the provision of educational facilities for those employed in, or about to take up, medical secretarial work. A full-time course for school-leavers has been run for several years at colleges all over the United Kingdom—over 70 colleges now mount this course—and anyone fortunate enough to employ one of the Association's diplomates will agree that the standards set, and achieved, are remarkably high.

On the recommendation of its Education Committee and its Advisory Board (the former consisting of representatives of the Departments of Education and Science and of Health and Social Security, with principals and college tutors as well as members of the Association's Council and the latter of representatives from all the Royal Colleges) the Association also now offers a range of other courses—post 'A' level, part-time, day-release and evening classes—to cater for the needs of the majority of interested persons, whether student or in post.

Training is, therefore, available but many general practitioners complacently continue to employ untrained persons—ignoring the benefits which could accrue to their practices were these same employees offered the opportunity to train (for example, more than the 40% in the sample would be complying with the law by having contracts of employment!).

In conjunction with the Royal College of General Practitioners, the Association mounted a pilot