

## *Two national conferences of postgraduate advisers in general practice*

D. J. PRICE, M.R.C.G.P.

Secretary, National Conference of Postgraduate Advisers in General Practice

Since the last report in the *Journal*, the Conference of Postgraduate Advisers in General Practice has met twice, in March and June 1974. This itself is an indication of the rapidly changing scene of postgraduate education for general practice, particularly with regard to the imminent massive increase in vocational training programmes.

The conference resolved that it was possible to implement mandatory vocational training in this decade. Advisers, particularly the Chairman of the conference, Dr George Swift, played a helpful role in the subsequent annual conference of local medical committees. At this meeting a motion backing the National Conference of Postgraduate Advisers' proposition was carried. The debate continues over the problems of increasing on a large scale the number of vocational training programmes without lowering the quality of the training provided. This problem has also exercised the Education Committee of the College.

One firm conclusion was drawn—that at present there is insufficient knowledge of the number of doctors training for general practice and strenuous efforts are being made to improve the scope and quality of information available nationally. The Central Council for Postgraduate Education is convening a special working meeting for this. As far as hospital posts are concerned, the Department of Health and Social Security maintains that there are sufficient posts available at senior house officer level to cope with demands for vocational training for general practice. However, this assumes that the rather broad criteria of the present vocational training allowance are not to be altered.

An important aspect of vocational training is the provision of day release courses and the advisers were pleased to learn of the mechanism, announced by the Department of Health and Social Security and approved by the Review body, whereby doctors running courses in association with vocational training schemes could be entitled to the trainer allowance. At the same time the College's own ambitious scheme, financed by the Nuffield Trust, to train more doctors as course organisers has involved advisers in selection and nomination.

The national conferences for trainees has already been reported in the *Journal* (Cox, 1974). One important outcome for regional advisers was the firm recommendation from that conference that there should be regional meetings of trainees. These will provide valuable opportunities for consumer feedback.

Apart from these major problems outlined above, the conferences touched on many matters of concern for regional advisers. These have ranged from trainer selection, and its appeal system to trainer/trainee contracts, the provision of Balint seminars and the evaluation of Medical Recording Service Foundation tapes. Last but not least there is some opportunity for regional advisers to chat less formally about their differences and difficulties.

### REFERENCE

Cox, J. (1974). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, **24**, 640–42.