

view is gaining wide acceptance in the country as a whole.

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#### REFERENCE

Hasler, J. (1974) *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, **24**, 613-616.

#### WHAT KIND OF COLLEGE?

Sir,

With the arrival of the *Annual Report* of the College it is clear that the era of the instant committee-man is well and truly with us.

A quick count reveals that five members of the College hold 76 appointments or committee places between them, one member having as many as 23 posts (and that is excluding faculty positions).

As some of these members must travel from the north and from Scotland, it is difficult to believe that they can possibly be fulfilling their primary role as family practitioners.

Surely it is high time that this self-perpetuation ("jobs-for-the-boys?") be ended, and the "apex" of the College broadened?

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### Review of Nutrition of Housebound Old People.

A. N. EXTON-SMITH, B. R. STANTON,  
A. C. M. WINDSOR. Pp. 68. King Edward's  
Hospital Fund for London. Price: £1.00.

This study is concerned with the assessment of the nutritional status of a group of housebound old people and a comparison of their dietary intake with those of more active old people. However, this is not only a study of nutrition it encompasses many of the problems in geriatric care facing the medical profession today. As the book clearly shows disturbances of dietary intake are reflections of physical and mental disease in the elderly.

The report is clearly and lucidly presented. It is printed in clear type on good quality paper with the figures and diagrams well laid out and easy to follow. It is a pleasure to read such a book especially nowadays when so many books have to be printed in small type on rather inferior paper to reduce costs.

The conclusions to be drawn from this study reinforce the need for the reorganization of the care of the elderly in general practice. Since Williamson's & Lowther's work in the sixties there has been a growing realization that the present system of care of the aged has serious deficiencies. The reliance on the self reporting of disease by the patient does not reveal the full extent of the needs.

This study spotlights the vulnerability of the housebound especially as regards their nutritional intake and state of health. It indicates the need to identify this group through the medium of the health visitor and so bring them under the care and supervision of the general practitioner. There are several other interesting features to emerge from the study including the fact that patients who had sustained a fracture of the femur had a lower mean Vitamin D intake than the mean Vitamin D intake for the whole group. The suggestion that milk fortified with Vitamin D be included in the 'meals on wheels' service appears to have considerable merit.

All in all the importance of this excellently

produced little book far outstrips its size. It can be read with profit by all those who are interested in the care of the elderly.

AUSTEN ELLIOTT

#### REFERENCE

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

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