

EVALUATING TREATMENTS

Sir,
Dr Johnson's article in the December *Journal* provided interesting information. Many of the conclusions he draws, however, are not justified by the facts he presents. For example, to state that penicillin V is more efficient at preventing people returning with a cough than ampicillin is obviously nonsense and it is quite apparent that it would be quite different types of patients who received penicillin V and ampicillin.

It is difficult to see what organism that might cause a cough, that would be treated by penicillin V. The author himself alludes to the deficiencies of such conclusions, but it is none the less misleading to talk about comparative efficiency under such completely uncontrolled conditions. One may get some idea of patterns of illness and response to treatment, but to compare two treatment groups there is surely no substitute for the randomised controlled clinical trial.

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REFERENCE

Johnson, R. (1974). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, **24**, 832-836.

MDs FROM GENERAL PRACTICE

Sir,
I wish to apologise for inadvertently leaving out the names of two MD recipients from the article 'MD by Thesis from General Practice' which appeared in this *Journal* in the November 1974 issue. The first is Dr A. C. Cobbett who proceeded MD from Dublin in 1968, and second Dr Robert C. Heddle who proceeded MD in

1969 from the University of Adelaide.

W. O. WILLIAMS

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Swansea,
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REFERENCE

Williams, W. O. (1974). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners* **24**, 778-783.

Sir,

On reading through the November *Journal*, I saw the article by W. O. Williams of Swansea, entitled *M.D. by thesis from general practice*.

I notice in his table 2, that Adelaide is mentioned as having had 60 M.D.s granted between 1957 and 1971, but none from general practice in this period.

I felt to put the record straight, that I should inform you that there have been, over the past 25 years, three M.D.s (to my knowledge) granted to men in general practice and from general practice.

These were respectively, John Covernton in 1947, who while working in a country practice, wrote his M.D. thesis on the congenital myopathies of childhood. Secondly, in 1947, Clifford Jungfer, who is a Fellow of the Royal College as well as a past President of the Australian College, wrote an M.D. thesis on a child health survey in the Adelaide Hills, and more recently, Robert C. Heddle, a Fellow of the Royal Australian College gained his M.D. thesis in 1969 for his general-practitioner study of the health of the students of the university of Adelaide while working there in the student health centre.

I submit these facts to you so that the survey of Dr Williams can be completed from one small part of the British Commonwealth.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Hypertension: Its Causes, Consequences and Management (1974). PICKERING, SIR GEORGE. Second edition. Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. 150 pages. Price: £2.50.

Sir George Pickering has produced a second edition of his paper-back on hypertension. This really is a truncated version of his larger book published by the same publishers.

In eight chapters and 150 pages the physiological background is examined. The significance and epidemiology are discussed, the natural history and consequences are presented, and the problems of classification demonstrated, the assessment of the patient described and a management suggested.

As might be expected the material is presented with an authority that one would expect from

a Fellow of the Royal Society, elected for his work on cardiovascular research—but somehow one has the uneasy feeling that Sir George writes from past experience, which may be vast, but without a completely up-to-the-minute appreciation of present practical clinical problems and issues. In particular the chapters on assessment and management could have been better related to general practice, if Sir George had consulted with some of his many general-practitioner friends and colleagues.

Missing is any reference to the case for and against screening for high blood pressure. Nor are there any references to, or a discussion of, the many recent and relevant papers from general practice on high blood pressure. In a well-produced book it is surprising that 'Septin' has been