

Dr S. E. Ellison

Dr S. E. Ellison presented a paper entitled *The Problem for the General Practitioner*. In addition to the points already made, he mentioned the astonishingly wide range of drugs prescribed by general practitioners shown by multi-observer studies, yet each doctor individually had a relatively small repertoire from which he commonly selected his therapy. Dr Ellison considered that the issues with which the conference was concerned really extended beyond communication as such and included both education and a critical reviewing of one's daily work.

Dr E. D. Quantock

Dr E. D. Quantock, put forward the industry's point of view in his paper entitled *Problems of Adverse Reaction Dissemination: an Industry Viewpoint*. He indicated the willingness of industry to help the CSM in its difficult task. At the same time he indicated the uneasiness felt in many quarters about the apparent lack of validity of some of the data on which the CSM had often to base its judgments.

Dr M. O'Donnell

As a medical journalist, Dr M. O'Donnell gave an entertaining and provocative contribution entitled *Why not frighten the horses?* (an allusion to a comment on television concerning sexual morality and the permissive society). He stressed the importance of understanding the journalist's point of view in relations between the medical profession and the media. There was no corporate journalistic responsibility as such—though each journalist had a responsibility governed by many different factors.

Discussion

The discussion after these papers highlighted the need for a more effective approach to undergraduate education and postgraduate training in prescribing.

The provision of information needed to be improved, and one way might be by establishing groups of general practitioners trained and equipped for the special requirements of providing hard data. This suggestion was criticised on several grounds including the bias it might introduce into the system and the reluctance of general practice to accept ideas invoking 'selection.' Nevertheless the key role of general practitioners in providing information was emphasised by Dr Inman who indicated that of the 3,000–4,000 notifications received annually, half came from general practice. Other points raised in debate included the role of the pharmacist and the potential contribution he could make in a co-operative approach involving retail chemists, hospital pharmacists, and general practitioners in a given locality.

Summing up

The Chairman of the Committee on Safety of Medicines, Sir Eric Scowen, concluded the proceedings by stressing the need for co-operation of all concerned. The conference provided a useful forum for the exchange of ideas, some of which would be pursued by the Committee in furthering its work.

Association of university teachers of general practice

J. G. R. HOWIE, M.D., Ph.D., M.R.C.G.P.

Honorary Secretary,
Association of University Teachers of General Practice

The Annual Scientific Meeting of the Association was held in Southampton on 10 and 11 July 1975. Thirty-three members and 18 guests were present.

On the first morning, following an introduction by the Dean of Southampton University Medical School, Professor E. D. Acheson, papers were presented on the management of spina bifida (Dr J. H. Walker, Newcastle), on the distributions of patients in city practices with different zoning policies (Professor I. M. Richardson, Aberdeen) and comparing the attitudes of

general practitioners, physicians, and surgeons to identical teaching material (Dr R. Harvard Davis, Cardiff).

The afternoon session was devoted to workshops discussing selected problems in undergraduate teaching.

On the second morning Dr I. Gilchrist (Manchester) read a paper on the physical and psychological characteristics of patients with low back pain, and this was followed by three papers developing the different aspects of the theme of evaluation of quality of clinical care (Dr G. Keele, Manchester; Dr P. M. Reilly and Mrs P. McCready, Belfast; and Dr C. Watkins, St. Thomas's).

The final session included papers on postgraduate education (Dr G. Swift) and on the development of the new Health Service in New Zealand (Dr P. Hertnon).

The Annual Business Meeting was held at the end of the first day's proceedings and the following were elected to the Executive Committee for 1975-76.

Dr J. H. Walker (Newcastle) *Chairman*

Professor J. S. McCormick (Dublin)

Dr D. H. H. Metcalfe (Nottingham)

Professor D. C. Morrell (St. Thomas's)

Dr J. S. K. Stevenson (Edinburgh)

Dr J. G. R. Howie (Aberdeen) *Secretary*

The Annual Scientific Meeting in July 1976 will be held in Newcastle.

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