

one regarded their interview as an appalling intrusion into their lives.

R. MACG. AITKEN,

The Surgery,
Church Street,
Spalding,
Lincs.

REFERENCE

McCarthy, M. (1975). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, 25, 286-92.

THE TEAM

Sir,

The article, in the October *Journal* was amusing to read at first and it gave the impression of being a satire of other such vague articles you have published. It was only after study that it became obvious that it was meant to be taken seriously.

Eight pages of your *Journal* were used. Without loss of useful information it could have been condensed into a single page.

Venn diagrams and logic flow patterns are given, in this and other articles, a great deal of space, yet it is plain that the authors have studied logic little and modern mathematics not at all. They had better keep to words.

It is true that the whole field is in its infancy and some contribution may be better than one, but could we have more facts and fewer redundant words?

P. J. DOLLIS

Francesca,
Old Hall Lane,
Whitwell,
Worksop.

Sir,

I would like to congratulate you on the article *The Team* by Drs Lamberts and Riphagen which was quite outstanding and in the very highest tradition of organisation. It was a pleasure to read it.

R. M. RIDSDILL SMITH

Thornhills,
732 London Road,
Larkfield,
Kent. ME20 6BG.

REFERENCE

Lamberts, H. & Riphagen, F. E. (1975). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, 25, 795-52.

ABORTION

Sir,

I am writing to express grave disquiet over the contents of the Marie Stopes Memorial Lecture entitled *The Compulsory Pregnancy Lobby—Then and Now*. This is a disgraceful piece of

journalise, unworthy for publication in a journal of any academic standing. It is a blatant piece of propaganda containing partial and inaccurate material much of which is highly emotive. Some of it is so misleading and the rebuse of the truth is to be justly described as malicious. Much of it will certainly be most offensive to Catholic doctors.

An article of this nature advocating unrestricted abortion as a method of birth control, is grossly at variance with the declared objects of the College, and the best aspiration of general practice. It is enough to cause one to doubt whether the College supports those parts of the Hippocratic Oath and the General Declaration 1948, which express an undertaking "not to aid a woman to procure an abortion", and "maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception even under threat".

Can it be true that the College is prepared to compromise the precious trust that she has received from the past. Where does she stand?

J. BEATSON-HIRD

39 Weoley Hill,
Birmingham, 29.

Sir,

In her article on *The compulsory pregnancy lobby* (October *Journal*) Mrs Madeleine Simms confuses the issue, no doubt deliberately, between contraception and abortion. She also is less than fair to the attitude of the Anglican Church in quoting from the report of the Lambeth Conference of 1930.

The current attitude of the Anglican Church on these subjects was stated in unequivocal terms in the report of the Lambeth Conference of 1958. On contraception, Resolution 115 states:

"The Conference believes that the responsibility for deciding upon the number and frequency of children has been laid by God upon the consciences of parents everywhere: that this planning, in such ways as are mutually acceptable to husband and wife in Christian conscience, is a right and important factor in Christian family life and should be the result of positive choice before God. Such responsible parenthood, built on obedience to all the duties of marriage, requires a wise stewardship of the resources and abilities of the family as well as a thoughtful consideration of the varying population needs and problems of society and the claims of future generations."

On the subject of abortion, the report of the committee studying *The Family in Contemporary Society* states:

"In the strongest terms, Christians reject the practice of induced abortion, or infanticide, which involves the killing of a life already conceived . . . save at the dictate of strict and undeniable medical necessity . . . The sacredness of life is, in Christian eyes, an absolute which should not be violated."

Thus the Anglican Church (with most if not all Protestant Churches) is not a party to the "Compulsory pregnancy lobby" where contraception is concerned, but opposes abortion as this involves the destruction of human life.

Peter I. VARDY

REFERENCES

Simms, M. (1975). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, 25, 709-719.

The Lambeth Conference (1958). London: S.P.C.K.

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE COLLEGE

Sir,

This year I attended the annual college symposium for the first time. The content was fascinating,

and I have only one complaint: it was a day of visual boredom. There was a notion that it would be more democratic, or diplomatic, or at least a good idea, to reduce the speakers to sitting in the orchestra pit. It seemed a quaint paradox, when we were being exhorted to consider whole-person medicine, to be so often denied even a glimpse of our lecturers. I heartily applaud all those who had the courage to follow the old advice to "stand up, speak up and then shut up."

But gentlemen, what do I, as a small woman, do next year? Take my tapestry work to alleviate the monotonous view of pin-striped shoulders; or flee to the gallery where I may see, but might not hear?

MARGARET BIRCH

14 Plum Lane,
London SE 18.

BOOK REVIEWS

Learning to Care—Person to Person (1975). Second edition. P. S. BYRNE AND B. E. L. LONG. Pp. 118. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. Price: £4.00.

The popularity of this introductory guide to teaching is indicated by the rapid appearance of the second edition. Its success and the stature of its authors permit a strict appraisal of the usefulness of this book by general-practitioner trainers to whom, as part-time teachers, it is directed.

The lay-out has appropriately been influenced by Bloom's *Taxonomy*, progressing from dissemination of definitions of educational terminology, through its application and analysis towards synthesis, and arriving ultimately at evaluation.

The earlier chapters are pre-occupied with the "process" of education, which is described in terms of the language to which the reader is introduced in the second chapter. As a consequence, the previously uninitiated may well be depressed by the apparent mechanics of teaching in much the same way as a golfer might be by learning the complexities of the golf swing before experiencing the pleasure to be obtained on the course. The style of these early chapters is uneasy, reflecting an academic analysis perhaps artificial to the experience of the average trainer, who may feel that understanding the terminology of the educationist and the process of teaching apparently command a higher priority than the content of the exchange between trainer and trainee.

If, however, the early chapters display an uncertainty in style, the reader is rewarded in the second half of the book, where it becomes easier to identify with the authors. The later chapters provide the kind of guidance which many trainers will find helpful, particularly those dealing with the consultation, counselling, the use of the tape recorder, and finally the important areas of evaluation and assessment. Those with responsibility for

teaching in general practice, either individually or collectively, will find this a helpful book for whom a title *Caring to Learn* could be more relevant than *Learning to Care*. Perhaps in the third edition this transposition of the title could with advantage be associated with a rearrangement to allow the later chapters to welcome the reader, rather than act as a "reinforcement" for his success in reaching them.

A. G. DONALD

Contraception, Abortion and Sterilisation in General Practice (1975). OLDERSHAW, K. LESLIE. Pp. 288. London: Henry Kimpton. Price: £6.50.

Dr Oldershaw has written a winner. With an easy readable style he covers in a thorough and practical way the subjects in his title, and for good measure throws in at the end a chapter on sexual problems and venereal disease.

He rightly gives most space to oral contraception and presents an exceptionally well balanced account of current knowledge.

It is unthinkable that a reviewer could find nothing in a book with which to disagree. Two points trouble me, and I think they are important. Dr Oldershaw seems to accept that the Pill causes depression. He quotes the relevant figures from *Oral Contraceptives and Health* without appreciating that the small excess of reported depression in Pill users is likely to be predominantly due to biased reporting. If the Pill ever causes depression it must be a rare event. Yet depression remains a common reason for abandoning oral contraception. Women who give up the Pill are generally poorly motivated to other methods, and they experience a 20 per cent unplanned pregnancy rate within the year. If we assume that there are