

## *Helping ideas grow*

### Conference on research in general practice

Under the auspices of the Scottish General Practitioner Research Support Unit and Scottish Council of the Royal College of General Practitioners, a conference on research in general practice was held at the University of Stirling, 2-4 September 1976. Among the 50 general practitioners attending, a few had extensive first-hand experience of undertaking research projects, others wished to learn about basic techniques and tools (e.g. practice registers and disease indexes), but all were interested in exchanging ideas.

A static exhibition of contributions from various research units and elsewhere was incorporated: displays included material on alcoholism from the Scottish Health Education Unit, a joint study by the Public Health Laboratory Service and Royal College of General Practitioners on influenza from the R.C.G.P. Research Unit, Swansea, basic research tools from the R.C.G.P. Research Unit, Birmingham, items on records from Dr D. Metcalfe, University of Nottingham, feature cards from Messrs Jolley, and the structure of the Scottish General Practitioner Research Support Unit, with an outline of the services it provides.

In addition to the set sessions, individuals discussed among themselves some of their own projects, seeking and obtaining advice from others well placed to give it.

In summary, the occasion demonstrated clearly that there exists among service general practitioners many doctors both willing and able to undertake studies in their practices. Furthermore, service general practitioners can contribute useful ideas and work in addition to the gathering of data for others—however important that may be to those professional scientists carrying out their studies.

If this potential is to be developed to play its full part in helping health services to become more efficient, effective, and economical, without encouraging mediocrity, appropriate support, advisory services, and training are essential and must be made available wherever the enquiring mind is found in general practice.

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### ISCHAEMIC HEART DISEASE

Ischaemic heart disease is the commonest cause of death in Britain accounting for 25 per cent of deaths in 1971.

#### REFERENCE

Lewis, B. *et al.* (1974). *Lancet*, **1**, 141-149.

### 'ACTINAC' IN GENERAL PRACTICE

An open clinical assessment of Actinac, a new topical treatment for acne vulgaris, is reported. Good to moderate improvement was achieved in 50 per cent of patients in one week and in 72 per cent in three weeks. Side-effects were minimal.

#### REFERENCE

Hershon, E., Kerr, E. D. & Somerville, N. A. M. (1973). *Clinical Trials Journal*, **1**, 98-99.