

COST AND CHARGES IN THE FAMILY PRACTITIONER SERVICES

The estimated costs and charges in the family practitioner services for 1976/77 are as follows:

	Gross	Charges	£ million 1976/77
General medical services	352.4	—	352.4
General dental services	229.8	43.0	186.8
General ophthalmic services	64.1	23.1	41.0
Pharmaceutical services	532.2	28.7	503.5
Totals	1,178.5	94.8	1,083.7

Reference

Hansard Official Report (1976). 927, No. 1066, col. 654.

HEALTH AND PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES STATISTICS FOR ENGLAND

Hospital pharmacists

Between 30 September 1974 and 30 September 1975 the number of whole-time equivalent hospital pharmacists in England rose by 18 per cent from 1,759 to 2,077.

General practitioners

There were 26,197 general medical practitioners in the NHS in Great Britain on 1 October 1975. Of these 21,752 practised in England.

Prescriptions

A total of 334,648 million prescriptions was dispensed in Great Britain in 1975 at a total cost of £431,613 m. The average total cost per prescription was £1.29 and the average net ingredient cost 94.9p.

The average number of prescriptions per person on doctors' lists was 6.25.

The proportion of prescriptions for proprietary preparations increased in England from 81 per cent in 1974 to 82 per cent in 1975.

The largest group of prescriptions in England in 1975 was preparations acting on the nervous system, whereas the most expensive group was preparations acting on the cardiovascular system.

The number of prescriptions for barbiturates was 6,737 million, which was one million less than in 1974.

Prescriptions for non-barbiturate hypnotics increased from 8,846 million to 9,743 million.

Cost of pharmaceutical services

The cost of the pharmaceutical services in England in 1974/75 was 7.5 per cent of the total cost of the health and personal social services. This compares with figures for 1970/71, £176 m (8.8 per cent); 1971/72, £199 m (8.8 per cent); 1972/73, £226 m (8.7 per cent) and 1973/74, £249 m (8.2 per cent).

Reference

Health and Personal Social Services Statistics for England (1976). London: HMSO.

THE REVIEW BODY ON DOCTORS' AND DENTISTS' REMUNERATION

Role of the Review Body

"We recognize that, in the short term, some injustices may be inevitable in current circumstances, but we are bound to point to the consequences if a rational and orderly pay structure is not restored before long for doctors and dentists in the NHS. Only when this is possible will confidence be restored. Morale has suffered a serious decline in the last few years, and we see it as essential for the effectiveness of the NHS and for the good of the community as a whole for this decline to be reversed. We also see very real difficulties in the way of continuing to function as an independent review body unless it again becomes possible for us to have full regard to the principles behind the aims so clearly expressed by the Royal Commission on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (paragraph 1) in the exercise of our collective judgment."

Contraceptive services in general practice

The proportion of general practitioners who provide these services has risen from 92 per cent of all principals in 1975 to 94 per cent in 1976. The number of patients who receive the service has also risen, from 1.4 million patients for ordinary services in 1975 to 2.2 million in 1976, and from 15,000 for IUD services in 1975 to 58,000 patients in 1976.

Distinction awards

"We have found that, although the proportion of consultants holding an award has remained relatively stable at just over one third since the inception of the scheme in 1948, the proportion of those who spend a full career (to 65 years or over) in the hospital service and who secure an award has risen steadily in recent years and is now more than 60 per cent, of whom one half retire with a B award or higher. In general, the way in which the scheme has been operated

seems in some ways to be similar to a system of promotion within a hierarchical structure."

Reference

Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (1977). Command 6800, p. 21. London: HMSO.

DENTAL STATISTICS

The Secretary of State for Social Services recently reported that the number of permanent teeth extracted by the general dental services in England had fallen by over 20 per cent during the past five years, although the number of courses of treatment had risen by over 24 per cent.

WEARING SEAT BELTS IN CARS

On 26 April 1977, a Bill to enforce the wearing of seat belts in cars, which had the support of the Government, was defeated in the House of Lords by 55 votes to 53.

Reference

British Medical Journal (1977). 1, 1225.

GOVERNMENT AID FOR DISABLED PRESSURE GROUPS

Mr Alfred Morris, Minister for the Disabled, recently announced that his Department gave over £385,000 in 1974/75 to aid pressure groups. Among the independent organizations representing disabled people the Royal National Institute for the Blind received £150,000, the Central Council for the Disabled £90,000 and the Disabled Living Foundation over £80,000. Smaller grants were also made, for example, £5,000 to the Disablement Income Group.

CORRECTION

In Dr P. Rutledge's article, *Reviewing an Appointment System*, published in the *March Journal*, it was stated that a feeling of bitterness and frustration was apparent in three or four of the critical replies. This should have read three quarters of the critical replies.