

Table 4. Repeat prescriptions (RP) of psychotropic drugs. Rates per 1,000 consultations in each of five groups of 20 recorders (rates expressed to nearest whole number.

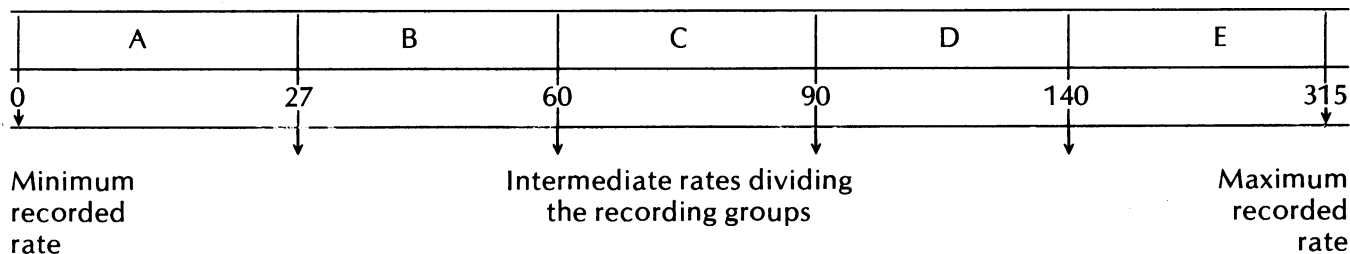


Table 5. Prescribing rates for total prescriptions and repeat prescriptions of psychotropic drugs in three categories according to number of consultations.

	Less than 249	250-349	350+
Total prescribing rate per 1,000 consultations	212	192	177
Repeat prescribing rates per 1,000 consultations	98	89	81

Mode of prescribing

Prescriptions were issued in three modes: new prescription (NP); continuing prescription (CP), issued at consultation; repeat prescription (RP), issued without seeing the patient at the time of issue.

Information concerning the relative proportion of prescriptions in each of the three modes is shown in Table 3. Eighteen per cent of all prescribed psychotropic drugs were for "new prescriptions"; 36 per cent were for "continuing prescriptions" issued at consul-

tation; and 46 per cent were for prescriptions issued without a concurrent consultation. There were two noteworthy departures from this relationship: fewer antidepressants were prescribed as "repeat prescriptions" than were prescribed as "continuing prescriptions"; the repeat prescription rate for barbiturates was more than double that for continuing prescriptions. Five doctors provided no repeat prescriptions at all for psychotropic drugs (Table 2). The variation in repeat prescribing rates is shown in Table 4.

Influence of workload

In Table 5 the total and repeat prescribing rates are detailed in three categories based on the total number of consultations returned. The proportion of repeat prescribing to total prescribing is equal in all categories (46 per cent). Psychotropic drugs were prescribed relatively more frequently where there were fewer consultations. This was also evident for repeat prescriptions.

Acknowledgements

This report is presented by the Birmingham Research Unit in cooperation with the Department of Engineering Production at Birmingham University. The support of Messrs Reckitt and Colman, Pharmaceutical Division, is gratefully acknowledged. The work of the recording doctors is appreciated.

OBITUARY

Dr E. G. Buchanan, MRCP, DRCOG

The North of Scotland Faculty has lost a good friend and a great doctor. Edward Buchanan lost his life, at the age of 41, as the result of a road accident on 3 October 1977 on his way to help victims of yet another accident on the dangerous Loch Ness road. In the Highlands, Dr Buchanan was one of the pioneers in dealing with road accidents at long range from hospital, and his Range Rover was, with the help of the Highland Health Board, extremely well-equipped to

meet the problems of such accidents. He was always ready to give help with speed, efficiency, and courage.

He was educated at George Watson's School in Edinburgh and went to medical school there, graduating in 1959. He did his house jobs in Stirling, where he met his wife, Marion. He went on to take an obstetric post in Helensburgh and gained the DRCOG. He started practice in Bedford and was then for some years in Bishopriggs before moving to Fort Augustus where for ten years he ran a single-handed dispensing practice with a wide scatter. For six of these years he had trainee

assistants, and how fortunate these young men and women were to learn good general practice from such a superb doctor and teacher. He was a natural leader, yet modest and self-effacing, full of good sense and blessed with great understanding of his fellow men. He had a rich and puckish sense of humour which sometimes concealed the earnestness of his purpose.

In a small community a country doctor has to be so much more than the skilled physician and Ed Buchanan lived for the community which he served so selflessly. He was a member of the Highland Medical Society and the Lochaber Medical Society and he took a great interest in the Abbey School at Fort Augustus. It was both fitting and moving to see the boys from the school in their scarlet uniforms acting as pallbearers at his funeral, where the attendance was outstanding even for a Highland funeral.

He was very interested in the work of the College and was an associate for five years before he became a member by examination in 1976.

His life was not all work. One of his hobbies was sailing and only this summer he sailed his small boat across the Minch. He was a dedicated fisherman and yet on one occasion when I let one of his newly caught sea trout drop into the depths of Loch Ness, he managed to laugh about it. He was an enthusiastic rock-climber and formerly a voluntary instructor at Glenmore Lodge near Aviemore. He was a keen cricketer, played golf, coached badminton, and still had time to help with various youth organizations.

Although Ed Buchanan did so much for medicine and for the community, the needs of his family came first, and no-one can measure their loss. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to his wife, his three children, and his mother. Fort Augustus is a poorer place without him, and his devotion and kindness will not readily be forgotten.

T. L. HENDERSON

Diffuse myelitis associated with rubella vaccination

Two patients who had received live rubella vaccine developed diffuse myelitis shortly afterwards. Neither patient fully recovered her motor function. In one patient the time between vaccination and development of neurological signs was rather too short to indicate a definite causal relation. Nevertheless, the chronological association is suggestive, and other observations of such an association may strengthen the suspicion that rubella vaccination may occasionally cause severe neurological damage.

Reference

Holt, S., Hudgins, D., Krishnan, K. R. & Critchley, E. M. (1976). *British Medical Journal*, 2, 1037-1038.



COLLEGE ACCOMMODATION

Charges for college accommodation are reduced for members (i.e. fellows, members and associates). Members of overseas colleges are welcome when rooms are available. All charges for accommodation include breakfast and are subject to VAT. A service charge of 12½ per cent is added. Members are reminded that children under the age of 12 years cannot be admitted and dogs are not allowed. Residents are asked to arrive before 18.30 hours to take up their reservations.

From 1 January 1977, charges are:

	Members	Others
Single room	£5	£9
Double room	£9	£14
Flat 1	£11	£14
	(£70 per week)	(£90 per week)
Flat 3	£12	£15
	(£75 per week)	(£95 per week)

Charges are also reduced for members hiring reception rooms compared with outside organisations which apply to hold meetings at the College. All hirings are subject to approval and VAT is added.

	Members	Others
Long room	£30	£40
Damask room	£20	£30
Common room and terrace	£20	£30
Kitchen	—	£10
Dining room	£10	£10

Enquiries should be addressed to:

**The Accommodation Secretary,
The Royal College of General Practitioners,
14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park,
London SW7 1PU.**

Tel: 01-584 6262

Whenever possible bookings should be made well in advance and in writing. Telephone bookings can be accepted only between 9.30 hours and 17.30 hours on Mondays to Fridays. Outside these hours, an Autophone service is available.