

2. The doctor and not the illness dictates the therapy.
3. The place of development surveillance in general practice.
4. The care of the elderly in general practice.

5. The management of hay fever in general practice.

This competition is open to all fellows, members, and associates of the College. Entries, which must be in essay form, should consist of not more than 10,000 words, be typed on one side of A4 paper only, and be entered under a 'nom de

plume' accompanied by the author's name and address in a sealed envelope. They should be marked 'Butterworth Gold Medal Essay Competition' and sent to the Secretary, Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, London SW7 1PU.

The closing date is 1 August 1978.

MEDICAL NEWS

MSD FOUNDATION

Merck, Sharp and Dohme is establishing a Foundation "to promote and advance all aspects of education, study, knowledge, research, and training in connection with the general practice of medicine".

In its early years the Foundation will concentrate on helping doctors involved in vocational training for general practice by providing them with technical educational services and teaching material of high quality.

The Foundation will be based in London and will be under the direction of a board of trustees guided by an advisory council. The advisory council will include representatives from all the main organizations concerned with education in general practice.

DR J. D. BRACKENRIDGE

Dr J. D. Brackenridge, FRCGP, has been appointed Chairman of the Lincolnshire Area Health Authority.

Dr Brackenridge is in general practice in Boston and has been a member of the Lincolnshire Area Health Authority since its formation in 1974. He was previously a member of the Boston Group Hospital Management Committee.

It is thought this is the first time a general practitioner in active practice has been appointed chairman of a health authority since the reorganization of the NHS in 1974.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Mr David Ennals, Secretary of State for Social Services, has announced that a

committee is to be set up for children, as recommended by the Court Report (1976), to advise the Government on co-ordination and development of health and personal social services for children and families with children.

Dr F. S. W. Brimblecombe, CBE, MD, FRCP, Consultant Paediatrician at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Exeter, and a member of the Central Health Services Council, has been appointed Chairman.

Reference

Committee on Child Health Services (1976). *Fit for the Future*. London: HMSO.

AUDIOVISUAL LIBRARY OPEN DAY

Following their move to new premises, the first open day to be held at Holly House by the Graves Medical Audiovisual Library, formerly the Medical Recording Service Foundation, will be on Wednesday 21 June.

Anyone who has an interest in medical education through the use of audiovisual aids is invited to attend.

A collection of audio tape-slide material, the largest in the world, will be on sale or available for hire or by subscription, and a new project which offers skill in all aspects of audiovisual production will be on display, with videotapes available for loan.

Those wishing to attend should contact Mrs Fay Fontana, Graves Medical Audiovisual Library, PO Box 99, Chelmsford CM1 5HL. Tel: 0245 421475.

NHS

Vocational trainees

The number of vocational trainees in

general practice in England at 1 October in each of the last ten years was as follows:

1966	119	1972	297
1967	114	1973	447
1968	130	1974	535
1969	171	1975	667
1970	194	1976	763
1971	232		

Dispensing doctors

On 1 October 1976 there were 2,565 dispensing doctors in England distributed between the regions as follows:

South East	662
South West	395
Yorkshire and Humberside	345
East Anglia	344
East Midlands	327
West Midlands	209
North	201
North West	82

List size of general practitioners

The average list size of unrestricted principals in general medical practice on 1 October 1976 by region was as follows:

East Midlands	2,460
North West	2,433
North	2,421
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,415
South East	2,303
East Anglia	2,287
South West	2,181

The average list size for the 20,551 unrestricted principals in England is 2,351.

On the same date the percentage of general practitioners in each of the main regions with list sizes of over 3,000 patients was as follows:

North West	19
West Midlands	18
Yorkshire and Humberside	17
East Midlands	17
North	13

South East	12
South West	6
East Anglia	6

The average for England was 14 per cent.

General practices

On 1 October 1976 there were 8,924 general practices in England. Of these 3,494 (39 per cent) were single-handed principals; 2,094 (23 per cent) had two principals; 1,658 (19 per cent) had three principals; 946 (11 per cent) had four principals; and 732 (8 per cent) had five or more principals.

It follows that 81 per cent of all general practices in England have either one, two or three principals.

Age analysis of general practitioners

	1971	1976
	(figures in percentages)	
Under 30	5	7
30-34	10	12
35-39	13	12
40-44	15	14
45-49	17	15
50-54	13	15
55-59	12	11
60-64	7	8
65-69	4	3
Over 70	3	3

The total number of general practitioners in England has increased from 20,597 in 1971 to 22,015 in 1976, an increase of seven per cent.

Reference

Department of Health and Social Security (1977). *Health and Personal Social Services Statistics for England 1977*. London: HMSO.

NHS IN WALES

Mr Barry Jones, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, has announced that an additional £1m will be available to the NHS in Wales in 1978/9.

POPULATION TRENDS

Analysis of live births

Of the live births in England and Wales in 1976, 72,000 (12.4 per cent) were to mothers born outside the UK. Of these, 42,000 (7.2 per cent of all live births) were to mothers born in the New Commonwealth and Pakistan; an increase over the 1975 figure, which was 6.7 per cent of all live births.

Marriage and divorce

The number of first marriages, where both husband and wife were marrying for the first time, was 244,000 in 1976, which was the lowest since the war years of 1939-45.

Marriages performed with a civil ceremony exceeded those performed with a religious ceremony for the first time since the civil registration began in 1837.

The number of marriages dissolved by divorce (127,000) was a record high figure.

Suicides

In 1976 the number of male suicides in the population in England and Wales was 2,330, which was the highest since 1969.

Infant mortality

The fall in infant mortality in England and Wales from 15.7 per 1,000 live births in 1975 to 14.3 per 1,000 live births in 1976 almost equals the combined fall of the previous three years and is greater than any corresponding period for over 20 years.

Reference

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (1977). *Population Trends 10*. London: HMSO.

PRESCRIPTION PRICING AUTHORITY

The Department of Health and Social Security is undertaking a study to see if cost-effective methods of recalling data from prescription forms can be carried out through the Prescription Pricing Authority.

The study has been authorized by Mr David Ennals, Secretary of State for Social Services, following recommendations in the Tricker Report.

Reference

Tricker, R. I. (1977). *Inquiry into the Prescription Pricing Authority*. London: HMSO.

MOBILITY ALLOWANCE

The Department of Health and Social Security reports that about 10,000 more disabled people will be able to claim mobility allowance when the upper age limit is extended to 58 during 1978.

The mobility allowance is a weekly benefit payable to people who are unable or virtually unable to walk because of physical disablement and are likely to remain so for at least 12 months. The benefit is £7 a week at

present but it will increase to £10 a week in July 1978.

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE

The percentages of total Government expenditure for the years 1974/5 were as follows:

Social services	16.4
Education	11.7
Defence	11.7
Health	11.5
Housing	9.5
Law and Order	2.6

Reference

Central Statistical Office (1975). *Social Trends*. London: HMSO.

WORKING GROUP ON SCREENING FOR SPINA BIFIDA

A Working Group to advise on a screening service for spina bifida and other neural tube defects has been endorsed by the Government's Standing Medical Advisory Committee.

The Group will be chaired by Sir Douglas Black, PRCP, and its terms of reference will be: "To advise on what guidance might be given to health authorities on the introduction into routine antenatal care of a service to detect neural tube defects."

Members of the Working Group will be nominated by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Welsh Office, the Scottish Home and Health Department, and the Standing Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee. They will represent clinical genetics, chemical pathology, paediatrics and neonatal paediatrics, epidemiology, midwifery, general practice, and health service administration.

INTERNATIONAL ROUND TABLE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COUNSELLING (IRTAC)

The Eighth International Conference of Counselling will be held at the University of Oslo, Norway, from 2 to 6 July 1978. Further information can be obtained from: Dr D. Hope, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH.

NEW RESTRICTIONS ON ADVERTISING MEDICINES

New regulations are being laid before

Parliament which seek to introduce safeguards against inappropriate claims being made in advertisements for over-the-counter medicines. They will also introduce a general prohibition on advertising to the public any medicine that is available only on prescription from a doctor or dentist.

FERTILITY THERMOMETER

The NHS General Medical and Pharmaceutical Services has been amended to allow the prescription of a fertility thermometer with effect from 1 April 1978.

Reference

NHS (1978). FPN 173.

OMBUDSMAN

The Health Services Ombudsman, Sir Idwal Pugh, in his report for August to November 1977, has supported a complaint by a patient against a nurse who disclosed confidential information without the patient's prior knowledge or consent.

The incident occurred in 1976 and a nursing officer divulged the patient's address without his consent.

Reference

Report of the Health Service Commissioner August to November 1977 (1978). London: HMSO.

DISABLED LIVING FOUNDATION

Clothing for the disabled

Day courses on clothing for the disabled, elderly, children, and the incontinent will be held on 18 and 19 October 1978. Further details are available from: Mrs Margery Thornton, CBE, Disabled Living Foundation, 346 Kensington High Street, London W14 8NS.

Bibliography for the partially sighted

The Disabled Living Foundation has now published a bibliography of published material, including large print, concerning partially sighted people.

The compiler was Miss Agnes Cameron, formerly Headmistress of Holmbrook School for Partially Sighted Children in Liverpool and recently Chairman of the National Association for the Education of the Partially Sighted.

This book is available, price £2, from

the Disabled Living Foundation, 346 Kensington High Street, London W14 8NS.

CERVICAL CYTOLOGY EXAMINATIONS

The number of cytologically positive patients found through cervical cytology examinations is higher among those examined by general practitioners than those examined by area health authority clinics and family planning clinics combined in the year 1975. Furthermore, the proportion (the number per thousand examined), which was 3.8 in 1975, was higher in general practice.

In the calendar year 1975 general practitioners were again the biggest single source of cervical cytology examinations and a new record number of 814,000 women were tested which represents about 32.5 per cent of all cytology examinations, the other sources being health authority clinics, family planning clinics, hospital clinics, and other clinics.

Reference

Health Trends (1977). 9, 90.

DEATHS FROM CANCER OF THE CERVIX UTERI

The rate of deaths recorded from cancer of the cervix uteri in recent years has been as follows:

	per million population
1970	93
1971	92
1972	88
1973	89
1973	89
1974	82
1975	85

Reference

Health Trends (1977). 9, 90.

THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON POSTGRADUATE TRAINING FOR GENERAL PRACTICE

The Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice and the Royal College of General Practitioners have reapproved the vocational training schemes at: the Central Middlesex Hospital, Charing Cross Hospital, Thanet, Coventry, Shrewsbury, Dudley, Boston, Leicester, N. Ireland, Birmingham (Self-constructed Rotational Scheme), and South Gwent.

The Galway Vocational Training Scheme has been approved.

All the schemes are recognized by the Royal College of General Practitioners for the purpose of the MRCGP examination.

REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL

The Conference on Rehabilitation International will be held at the University of Southampton from 13 to 15 September 1978. Further information can be obtained from: Mr C. Blake, Wessex Rehabilitation Association, Rehabilitation Department, Southampton General Hospital, Tremona Road, Southampton SO9 4XY.

INTERNATIONAL BALINT CONFERENCE

The Fourth International Balint Conference will be held at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, South Kensington, London SW7, England, from 7 to 10 September 1978.

Further information can be obtained from: Freelance Services, 37a Maida Vale, London W9 1TW.

SCOTLAND

The number of adenotonsillectomies in Scotland fell by 40 per cent between 1967 and 1973.

Reference

Wilson, J. M. G. (1978). *Health Bulletin*, 36, 5-13.

AMBULANCEMEN

The ambulancemen, who number about 16,500, have accepted a management side offer, backdated to 1 January 1978, which will result in increases in average earnings for most ambulancemen of £7.50 a week with a minimum increase in the basic rate of £5.30. Average weekly earnings can be expected to increase to about £82.

PARITY WITH GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

The Executive of the Junior Hospital Doctors' Association has pointed out

that there is a major discrepancy between the net income of general practitioners and that of registrars in the hospital service, whom the Association consider to have equivalent qualifications and experience. Salaries of junior doctors in house officer and senior registrar grades should, according to the Executive, be adjusted accordingly.

The Junior Hospital Doctors' Association is of the opinion that the most highly skilled members of the profession are to be found in the consultant grade and that consultants, of all doctors, should be receiving the highest salaries.

Reference

On Call (1978). 12, No. 2, 1.

MCGP SINGAPORE

The Singapore Medical Council has recognized the diploma of membership of the College of General Practitioners of Singapore as being a diploma registrable as an additional qualification.

INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) has just approved for release *IEC Publication 601 Part One* which lays down general standards of safety for medical electrical equipment. Further information about this can be obtained from the Information Officer, Central Office IEC, 1-3 Rue de Varembe, Geneva, Switzerland.

MURDER OF A GENERAL PRACTITIONER

A 70-year-old patient has recently been committed to Broadmoor for an indefinite period by Leeds Crown Court after admitting that he had killed a general practitioner.

GRANTS FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Mr Bruce Millan, Secretary of State for Scotland, on the recommendation of the Biomedical Research Committee has approved support for several research projects from NHS funds.

These total £128,820 over periods up to three years. None of the studies are from general practice.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BALINT REAPPRAISED

Sir,

It seems to me that the article by Dr Sowerby (*October Journal*, p. 583) is biased by a misapprehension of psychoanalysis as Freud himself conceived it. To call tenets of psychoanalysis mere conjectures is vastly misleading, and Popper's criticism (1963) also misses the point insofar as the founder of psychoanalysis did not separate science from art. As a recent worker in this field puts it: "He (Freud) thought manner essential to matter—of its essence" (Schwaber, 1976), which is in line with the opinion of other perceptive analysts and must have been realized by the literary establishment when Freud received the high honour of the Goethe prize for Literature, in 1930.

To many it may still be a heresy to speak of scientific art, but this is how some of us would qualify psychoanalysis: a unique blend of science and art with an overwhelming predominance of science which nevertheless is a challenge to contemporary notions of science.

Balint, besides Winnicott, was the foremost representative of this way of thinking in Britain as testified by his scientific work, his singular approach to the diagnostic and therapeutic problems of general practitioners, and by what I know through a personal (but alas too short) acquaintance with him. It con-

curs with the letter of Dr Julian Tudor Hart (*January Journal*, p. 57) in which he speaks of his persistence "in an unrepentant confusion of art and science". I should rather call it fusion, as this constitutes an adequate expression of the workings characteristic of the mental apparatus in creative activity.

This touches again upon Popper's work, which is the basis of Sowerby's criticism. I will only say here that the rigid and dogmatic distinction between science and art is as disastrous as the one between soma and psyche in the aetiology of diseases has proved to be.

ERICH SIMENAUER

16 Bartning Allee,
D-1000 Berlin 21.

References

- Popper, K. R. (1976). *Conjectures and Refutations*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Schwaber, P. (1976). In *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 31, 515-533. London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis.

JAMES MACKENZIE LECTURE

Sir,

Having now read the full text of Dr Pereira Gray's lecture (*January Journal* p. 6) I would like to congratulate him on the central theme of his discourse.

Admittedly there were some lancinating glimpses of the obvious which were often dressed up in (pseudo-) scientific clothes, complete with references—but that seems to be the College way. However, by drawing attention to the figures for home visiting as presented by some of the outstanding figures in the College, I think Dr Gray has done a great service to general practice—even if it leaves me, for one, wondering about the credibility of some of those 'outstanding figures'.

The Leeuwenhorst Working Party definition (1977) says that the general practitioner "will attend his patients in his consulting room and in their homes".

I contend that one visit per day does not adequately reflect the spirit of this definition.

Even Dr Gray's figure of the equivalent of 19 visits per week hardly does this. My own figures for 1977, of which I am not particularly proud, show a rate of 1.24 visits per patient, which with 1,900 patients gives me an average of about 45 visits per week (making no allowance for time away from the practice) and I would contend that my figures are nearer the average, for Scottish general practice at least.

If my figures were like those described by Drs Fry, Marsh, and Gray I should certainly be worried about the kind of family medicine I was practising—many geriatricians must do more