

would be willing to shorten their courses for science graduates to four years he believed that the realities of curriculum design, the move towards an integrated approach in medical teaching, cutting across departmental approaches, and influences of the examination structure, all operated against the concept.

Discussion

The discussion which followed centred on the problems of mature students. Opinions varied about the influence they had on the student body and about their subsequent performances, and also about the help available over economical and financial problems peculiar to this group of students. The special position of dental graduates was discussed: many medical schools were reluctant to admit such applicants to medicine unless they showed a clear commitment to oral surgery, and the nation's needs might be met by only one such admission per school per year. Professor W. I. N. Kessel, from the GMC Education Committee, reminded delegates that selection procedures not only selected medical students but influenced (he believed adversely) sixth-form education. Delegates would realize that however many overseas applicants and mature students were admitted, this proportion was of a finite number and could be interpreted as excluding otherwise ap-

propriately qualified UK born students who would work longer as service doctors within the National Health Service.

Comment

It was clear that many delegates shared a sense of inadequacy in the face of the complexity of the issues involved. It was generally felt, however, that given the inherent problems of current selection procedures, selection was carried out fairly and with great care. The need for research into subsequent student performance and performance as a doctor were clearly desirable. The actual administrative structure for the selection process was not discussed but informal discussion revealed that decisions would be taken by as few as one or two individuals or as many as a large complex committee structure allowed. Most medical schools were aware of the need to keep the situation constantly under review.

J. D. E. KNOX
G. R. TUDHOPE

References

- Interdepartmental Committee on Medical Schools (1944).
Goodenough Report. London: HMSO.
Royal Commission on Medical Education (1968). Todd Report.
London: HMSO.

OBITUARY

C. J. Swanson, OBE, MB ChB, FRCGP

C J. SWANSON practised for 46 years from Aberfeldy, a Scottish small town rural practice. A founder member of our College, he expressed his enthusiastic faith in the value of independent general practice by giving his time to yet another cause, although he was already fully extended.

His unflinching defence of general practice and its *Caritas* was invaluable; he chose the medico-political area, the BMA, and the Scottish and United Kingdom General Medical Committee, from which to further its cause and attained many of their highest offices.

He was the wise and outspoken touchstone for all our medico-political affairs, and the Scottish Office, as well as his Scottish colleagues, practitioners and specialists alike, all missed him greatly when he finally retired a few years ago. His hand in developing many special

features which make perhaps the Scottish National Health Service Act a bit more pliable will be clear to future historians. Yet he remained a rugged general practitioner, gaining the affection of his patients and the local community. His sense of fair play made him an excellent chairman; he was hard-hitting in debate and always put the care of the patient first.

His stamina in being able to sustain extensive travelling and hard work on behalf of patients and profession was a byword, as was his courage in remaining unruffled during landings in rough weather at Turnhouse Airport.

We were fortunate that he was still able to attend some local College meetings in his retirement, when he was full of interest and with his own contributions to make. He will remain more than life-sized in our memory.

E. V. KUENSSBERG

Mervyn Stuart Patterson, MB, Ch.M, FRACGP

ON Christmas Eve, 1978, there died, in Queensland, in his 94th year, Dr Mervyn Stuart Patterson, one of the oldest and most respected general practitioners in Australia.

Qualifying in medicine in 1908 at the University of Sydney, he practised for 61 years in Ipswich, one of the largest provincial towns in Queensland. When he graduated it was usual for general practitioners to undertake all the surgery in their practices. Mervyn Patterson was dextrous with his hands and was skilful



COLLEGE ACCOMMODATION

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From 1 September 1978, charges are (per night):

	Members	Others
Single room	£5	£12
Double room	£10	£20
Flat 1	£15	£25
Flat 2	£18	£30
Flat 3	£20	£35

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

	Members	Others
Long room	£40	£80
Damask room	£30	£50
Common room and terrace	£30	£50
Kitchen/Dining room	£10	£20
Seminar room	£20	£30
Poc room	—	£20

Enquiries should be addressed to:

**The Accommodation Secretary,
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.

and competent both as a surgeon and as an obstetrician.

He had a busy general practice and also held many other appointments. He was Government Medical Officer, Medical Officer of Health, Medical Inspector of Schools, Medical Referee for Pensions, Area Medical Officer for the Army, and Repatriation Medical Officer.

He served on the Queensland Council of the British Medical Association for 15 years and was President of the Queensland Branch of the BMA in 1929. In 1958 he delivered the BMA Jackson Lecture, "Fifty Years in General Practice", and in 1969 was elected a fellow of the Australian Medical Association, being given a standing ovation by the fellows and members present. In 1953 he had been one of the signatories to the request to the Royal College of General Practitioners for the establishment of the Queensland Faculty of the College. Later the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners was established and in 1968 he was elected a fellow of the RACGP.

Like all doctors practising in the country he was involved in a multitude of community service organizations and he also held high office in freemasonry. How he also found time to attend regularly clinical meetings and committee meetings in Brisbane (driving 50 miles there and back over what, in the early days, were appalling roads, or else going by train and getting home in the early hours of the morning) was astonishing.

Aged 78, he was called, as Government Medical Officer, to a mine accident and he went below and stayed all night with a seriously injured miner, trapped by a fall of coal. For this, and somewhat to his embarrassment, he was awarded a medal by the Royal Humane Society. He continued in active practice until he was 88.

Perennially young, he always fitted into whatever age group he happened to find himself. He was also celebrated for an amazing fund of amusing stories which were always appropriate to the occasion and to the company—a rare accomplishment. Commissioned in both World Wars, he retired with the rank of Major, RAAMC.

In 1910, he married Lucy Katharine Fisher, niece of Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Fisher of Kilverstone, who was First Sea Lord before the 1914-1918 War when Sir Winston Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty. His wife died aged 83 in 1963. They had five children, 18 grandchildren, and 25 great grandchildren. I was in practice with my father for 35 years and was also President of the Queensland Branch of the BMA and second President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

Mervyn Patterson was one of the last of the old type of family doctors and his passing marks the end of an era.

H. STUART PATTERSON