

## THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

**Annals of General Practice.** Published by the Australian College of General Practitioners, December 1959.

This issue of the annals begins with a "guest editorial" by Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn who promotes the interesting thesis that a college of general practitioners differs basically from other colleges "in that it caters for doctors who already possess the medical qualifications necessary for membership, using this term in its widest sense, and therefore has to provide for admission by election instead of by examination." He writes that the college "is like a giant club which affords opportunities for its members to discuss their medical problems with each other and at the same time encourage them not only to give their best services to their patients but to be constantly on the watch for opportunities to add to medical knowledge themselves." He adds that "the conditions imposed upon them (members) of undertaking continuous postgraduate study should effectively rescue anyone found in a rut."

The President of the Australian College, Dr W. A. Connolly, sends a message inviting support for the aims of the College, and adds "if membership is to mean anything, members must possess certain qualities of character and the ability to render an efficient general practitioner service not necessarily possessed by all who have passed their final medicine examinations. . . . To be efficient . . . requires postgraduate study. . . This must surely be the criterion for continuing membership of the College."

Seven pages and a full-page photograph are devoted to the visit of Dr Ian Gant, President of the College of General Practitioners in 1959, to the Australian College, and there is an account of the inaugural meeting of the Australian College.

The *Annals* includes scientific papers of high standard on "The Use of Inert Preparations in General-practitioner Research", "Influenza, Some Recent Significant Advances in Therapy", "Cerebral Vascular Disease", "Purpura", Hazards of Diagnostic Radiology", and "Emergencies in General Practice"; followed by "Impressions of North America—Medical and General", "The Lock-up Practice", "Some Educational Aspects of General

Practice", and accounts of various conferences and college meetings.

An interesting innovation headed "The Private Bin" gives a series of tips about practical matters, for example—

"Lie down on your back please. Do you find that 70 per cent of patients faced with this simple request will lie face down? . . . It is the same all over the world. The only way out is to ask them to lie down, face up." And another—"Roll the sphygmomanometer cuff with the bag on the outside of the roll instead of the natural way the cuff can then be applied as a bandage, with greater ease and a saving of time."

Inserted in the *Annals* are about a dozen loose-leaf pages describing drugs, with their presentations, prices, etc., each classified on a therapeutic basis for filing in an "index of current therapy".

**Allergic Reactions to Penicillin.** Report on a survey conducted by the Research Committee of the N.S.W. Faculty of the Australian College of General Practitioners. *Med. J. Aust.* (20th June 1959).

The objects of the survey were (1) to determine the incidence of reactions to penicillin, (2) to record clinical features, and (3) to discover any relationship between reactions and the types of preparation used.

The material for the series, some 6,832 patients treated with penicillin, was supplied by 36 doctors between June 1958 and September 1959. A questionnaire was returned on 88 cases of penicillin sensitivity.

In the analysis of the 6,832 patients, 2,874 were males and 2,432 were females (1,526 "not stated"), and reactions occurred in 60 males and 27 females (1 "not stated")—a male-female ratio of 2:1.

Immediate reactions, seven in all, were mainly anaphylactic in type—one severe (nearly fatal), one moderate, and four mild; there was also one with urticaria: six had had penicillin previously, and three had a history of allergic troubles.

Among the delayed reactions, which came on during the two weeks after the administration of penicillin, the skin was chiefly affected (urticaria, 64; erythema, 46; arthralgia, 20; subsequent desquamation, 11; fever, 9). About 60 per cent had had penicillin previously, and about 70 per cent had an "allergic background".

An increased number of reactions, *pro rata*, was noticed for benzathine penicillin, but the numbers treated with this preparation were relatively small. Most reactions followed procaine penicillin, which was used in 4,763 of the 6,832 instances. Oral administration appeared to reduce the incidence of reactions to about one-third.