
COLLEGE NEWS

PRACTICE ORGANIZATION ROOM

The current exhibition concerning the doctor's office continues, with displays giving suggestions for the deployment of the receptionist and describing different methods of training for the general practice receptionist. The role of the secretary is discussed this month.

A display of various types of office furniture has been mounted by Messrs Elva Medical and the cabinets contain suggestions for the contents of the doctor's case.

The Practice Organization Study continues to attract much attention, being a concise account of the internal organization of a wide selection of practices throughout the United Kingdom, including descriptions of the innovations in those practices.

BUTTERWORTH GOLD MEDAL

The Butterworth Gold Medal is awarded for the best essay relevant to general medical practice from a list of three selected subjects. The subjects for 1980 are:

1. The general practitioner accoucheur in the 1980s.
2. The management of giddiness.
3. The case for and against specialization 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 31 March 1980.

MRCGP EXAMINATION

The dates for the next MRCGP examinations are as follows:

May/July 1980

Written papers: Thursday, 15 May 1980. Orals: in Edinburgh during the week ending 29 June 1980 and in London during the week ending 5 July 1980.

Closing date: 20 March 1980.

October/December 1980

Written papers: Thursday, 30 October 1980. Orals: in Edinburgh and London during the week ending 13 December 1980.

Closing date: 4 September 1980.

The written papers will be held in London, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Cardiff, Belfast, and Dublin. These and other centres may be used as required, subject to a minimum (and in some centres a maximum) number of candidates. It may be necessary to limit the total numbers and candidates are therefore advised to apply well in advance of the closing dates.

The application fee is £50 and the reapplication fee £25. Application forms may be obtained from the Membership Secretary at the College.

UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY PRIZE COMPETITION 1980

The Royal College of General Practitioners awards three prizes of £70, £50, and £40, with an additional £10 in book tokens, to successful candidates in a competition which is open to all undergraduates of medical schools in the UK and Eire who have not yet passed their final examination.

Candidates are asked to submit an essay on a subject relevant to the practice of medicine in the community. This may take the form of an account of a clinical, epidemiological, or practice organization study associated with general practice, or a case report of patients seen in general practice.

Particulars of entry and application forms can be obtained from the Secretary, Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, London SW7 1PU.

The closing date is 31 May 1980.

FUTURE COURSES

16 January 1980

Patient participation in primary health care

NINTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON GENERAL PRACTICE AND FAMILY MEDICINE

The American Academy of Family Medicine will be hosts for the Ninth World Conference to be held in New Orleans from 5 to 9 October 1980 and once again the Royal College of General Practitioners is arranging group travel for those who are interested. The meeting will coincide with the Annual Convention of the American Academy.

In addition, the travel agents (VIP Travel Ltd, 42 North Audley Street, London W1) will be happy to arrange visits to other parts of the United States for those who wish to extend their stay.

Because of the present favourable exchange rate for the £, it has been possible to bring down the price for the return air journey, plus 7 nights at the conference hotel (bed only), to less than £450 per person. As this is an educational exercise, those who are going might wish to discuss with their accountant the possibility of charging this as an expense for tax purposes.

MEDICAL NEWS

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

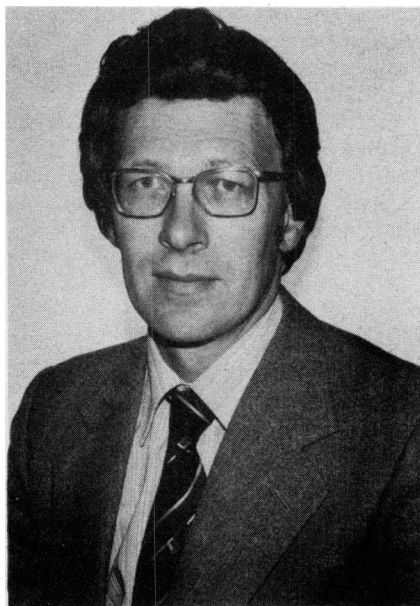
Dr J. G. R. Howie, MD, PH.D, MRCGP, Senior Lecturer in the Department of General Practice at the University of Aberdeen, has been appointed to the

James Mackenzie Chair of General Practice at the University of Edinburgh.

Dr Howie, who is 42 and married with three children, qualified from Glasgow in 1961 and worked as a gen-

eral practitioner in Glasgow from 1966 to 1970 after which he was appointed Lecturer in General Practice at Aberdeen.

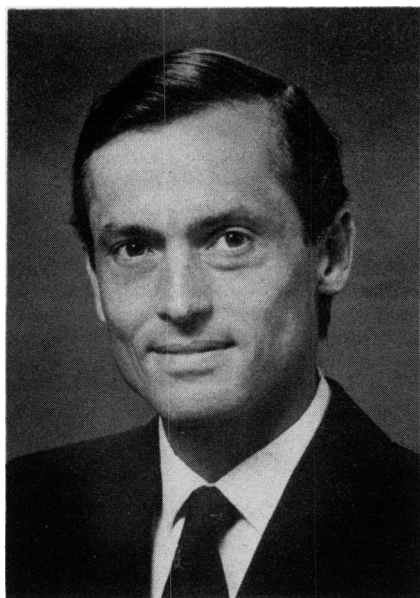
Dr Howie was Secretary of the As-



sociation of University Teachers of General Practice and is a member of the Biomedical Research Committee of the Chief Scientist Organization of the Scottish Home and Health Department (1977 to 1981). He has written numerous articles which have been published in the *Lancet*, *British Medical Journal*, *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, *British Journal of Medical Education*, and many other journals. His book, *Research in General Practice*, has recently been published by Croom Helm.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Dr N. C. H. Stott, B.Sc, MRCP, Senior Lecturer in General Practice at the



Welsh National School of Medicine, has been appointed to the Chair of Primary Care at the University of Southampton.

Dr Stott is 40, married, with three children. He qualified in Edinburgh in 1966, was formerly Medical Officer at St Lucy's Mission Hospital, Transkei in 1971/72, and has been Senior Lecturer at Cardiff since 1972.

He has written numerous articles, particularly on clinical and administrative review in general practice, the use of antibiotics in respiratory infection, and on the potential in every primary care consultation.

These have been published in the *British Medical Journal*, *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, *Medical Education*, *Biomedical Computing*, *Journal of Pathology and Bacteriology*, *British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine*, and many other journals.

Dr Stott took up his new appointment on 1 January 1980.

JOINT CONSULTANTS COMMITTEE

Dr J. D. N. Nabarro, MD, FRCP, Consultant Physician, Middlesex Hospital, London, has been elected Chairman of the Joint Consultants Committee.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

A dinner was held at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland on Thursday, 11 October 1979 by the Regional Vocational Training Committee, on the occasion of the visit to Dublin of the Royal College of General Practitioners to see the Dublin Vocational Training Scheme.

Professor T. Counihan presided and noted that this was the first occasion in history at which the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland had welcomed representatives from the Royal College of General Practitioners. The extremely high quality of applicants for the Dublin Vocational Training Scheme was striking and augured well for the future of general practice in Ireland.

Dr J. S. Norell, Dean of Studies of the Royal College of General Practitioners, replied and expressed his College's gratitude for the great kindness and hospitality with which his team had been received. He greatly welcomed the atmosphere of mutual co-operation between the different branches of medicine.

Those present were: Professor T. Counihan, University College, Dublin; Chairman of the Regional Vocational

Training Committee; Professor A. Brown, Dean of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland; Professor D. Hourihane, Dean of Trinity College, Dublin; Professor P. Meenan, Dean of University College, Dublin; Professor S. Doyle, Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland; Dr M. Flynn, Secretary of the Irish Medical Association and Institute of General Practice; Dr Luke Clancy, Trinity College, Dublin; Mr J. Nolan, Chief Executive Officer, Eastern Health Board; Mr J. Darby, Chief Executive Officer, Council for Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education; Dr M. Berber, Royal College of General Practitioners.

The visitors from the Royal College of General Practitioners were Dr J. S. Norell, Dr R. J. Bennison, and Dr D. J. Pereira Gray.

NURSES, MIDWIVES, AND HEALTH VISITORS ACT

The Government is reported to have decided to lay an order before Parliament which will allow National Boards to be set up in the summer of 1980 to be followed by a Central Council.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON IMMEDIATE CARE

The British Association of Immediate Care Schemes, in conjunction with the Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (UK) and the Centre for Emergency Medicine (USA), is holding an International Congress on Immediate Care in Brighton, UK, from 22 to 25 October 1980.

SYMPOSIUM ON THERAPEUTIC DRUG MONITORING

The World Conference on Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics is holding a conference from 3 to 9 August 1980 in London, and those interested in attending should get in touch with Professor Vincent Marks, Department of Biochemistry, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5XH.

GPTV — UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

A programme entitled "The Nurse in General Practice" has been based on the recent report by Dr Barry Reedy, of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne's Medical Care Research Unit, entitled "Nurses and Nursing in Primary Care in England". The programme lasts for 42 minutes and is in colour. The hire

charge is £5 plus postage plus VAT for 10 days, and the sale charge £20 plus the cost of the relevant television videotape plus postage plus VAT.

Further information and enquiries should be made to Miss Pat Gulliford, London University Audiovisual Centre, 11 Bedford Square, London WC1.

PICCADILLY CIRCUS PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICE

The 24-hour pharmaceutical service operated by Boots the Chemists Ltd at its Piccadilly Circus branch ended in November 1979 after 54 years.

The company had found it increasingly difficult to obtain staff who were prepared to work through the night in central London. The reasons included the danger of armed robbery, assault, and 'mugging'.

Datamoor Ltd (trading as Bliss Chemists) operates a 24-hour service at

50 to 56 Willesden Lane, London NW6.

Reference

Pharmaceutical Journal, 223, 372.

MOST FREQUENTLY PRESCRIBED DRUGS

The three most frequently prescribed drugs in England during 1976 in terms of the number of doses prescribed were: codeine, paracetamol, and diphenhydramine. The top three in terms of number of prescriptions written were paracetamol, codeine, and diazepam.

Reference

Research (1979). "Top" drugs. *Pharmaceutical Journal*, 223, 395.

SCIENTIFIC MEETING IN MALAYSIA

The First International Scientific Meeting of the College of Physicians of

Malaysia, the College of Surgeons of Malaysia and the College of General Practitioners of Malaysia will be held from 22 to 25 May 1980.

Further details can be obtained from Dr Goh Chin Siew, MMA Secretariat, Fourth Floor, MMA House 124, Jalan Pahang, Kuala Lumpur 02-14, Malaysia.

EQUIPMENT FOR THE DISABLED

Equipment for the Disabled have now produced a new publication called *Housing and Furniture*, fourth edition; it has 92 A4 pages, including over 290 items, and is fully illustrated. The price is £2.40 including postage and packing within the United Kingdom and £5.75 including postage and packing overseas. Further details can be obtained from Equipment for the Disabled, 2 Fore-down Drive, Portslade, Brighton BN4 2BB.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COURSES FOR THE MRCGP EXAMINATION

Sir,
East Anglia, like other Regions, has been running courses for the MRCGP examination for some years. Latterly the course has been run by a small group of regional advisers, course organizers and recent ex-trainees, with examiners advising us. Consequently we have taken a closer look at the philosophy behind such courses, as well as their objectives, in an attempt to work out a rational structure for them.

Why should one need to run an examination course at all (one could construe it as a form of cramming)? The corollary must be that a good course contains no element of factual learning (other than fortuitously) but concentrates on examination technique and method. One may soften this approach by including some curriculum study to help those examinees whose studies may not have been well organized, but the main purpose of MRCGP courses must be to master the technique and method of the examination so as to make the best use of the knowledge the candidate possesses.

Objectives arise naturally from these considerations. For instance, the candidate should:

1. Acquire some knowledge of the way

in which the examiners choose and mark questions.

2. Gain experience in the different examination techniques:

- a) Multiple choice questionnaire (MCQ).
- b) Modified essay question (MEQ).
- c) Traditional essay.
- d) Viva.

3. Learn examination techniques which might improve the marks gained.

4. Look critically at aspects of knowledge which may be required, particularly those which may be easily overlooked in everyday practice.

The organizers may have the specific objective of identifying a candidate who appears to be in difficulty, and may provide individual counselling.

Thus useful strategies appear, for example:

1. Practice, under simulated examination conditions, in all aspects of the examination.

2. Self-marking (in small groups) of the answers arrived at in 1. A small group of eight or 10 members will nearly always produce all the possible answers to a question, and the marking emphasis awarded by the group shows up individual deficiencies in a valuable way.

3. Simulated vivas, using candidates on both sides of the table, in small groups.

4. The use of recent successful examinees as a resource in every group.

5. The use of examiners in an advisory capacity. It seems quite possible to use examiners as a valuable resource without compromising their official position.

6. A study of whatever seems relevant in general practice at the time, particularly the topics, 'The Practice' and 'Medicine and Society'.

One of our main difficulties has been the effort required to produce fresh, relevant questions for the written examination which those attending the course are unlikely to have seen previously. We would welcome some form of inter-regional collaboration both in exchanging material and in techniques, and would be happy to organize (and even host) an informal meeting of those concerned in running MRCGP courses in other regions. In the meantime, I would be grateful for any information that MRCGP course organizers can provide and am quite happy to act as a provisional collator and distributor of useful course material.

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