

men and women to measure their own blood pressure at home twice a day for four weeks. There is also an interesting paper from the central research laboratory of the Russian Ministry of Health on changes in electrolyte transmission across cell membranes, which seems either to have preceded, or at least to have coincided with, similar work in France and the United States. Sodium balance and sodium transport seem at present to offer the main hope of avoiding a future in which 15 per cent of the whole adult population spend most of their lives on antihypertensive drugs.

Generally speaking, only individuals and libraries with both a consuming

interest and a great deal of spare money should consider buying it.

JULIAN TUDOR HART

PATIENT MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

Chertow, B. S., Dhingra, R. C., Pillay, V. K. G., and Nerenberg, R. L.

*Prentice Hall International
Hemel Hempstead (1980)
318 pages. Price £18.80*

Fifteen MEQs can't be a good buy at £18.80, even if they are excellent. These

are indelibly American. The reader is soon in the transatlantic world of emergency rooms and offices ("You are an internist working in a multispecialty rural practice with admission privileges to a well-equipped community hospital"—country general practitioner with cottage hospital?), but disbelief is never suspended, for me at least. A good MEQ must be realistic.

If a set of MEQs is wanted, the *Update* ones on "Patient Management Problems" are much better, very much cheaper, and they don't need a fancy felt tip pen.

R. H. WESTCOTT

REPORT

Spring General Meeting 1980

THE Spring General Meeting of the College was held at Windermere from 25 to 27 April, 1980 and was organized by the Cumbria Sub-Faculty of the North of England Faculty of the College.

Clinical standard setting—a faculty enterprise

The North of England Faculty arranged a Friday afternoon session on clinical standard setting at the Belsfield Hotel, Bowness on Windermere. The Chairman was Dr Colin Waine, Chairman of the North of England Faculty.

Dr Donald Irvine

Dr Donald Irvine, General Practitioner, Ashington, Northumberland, Regional Adviser in General Practice for the Northern Region and Secretary of the Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice, spoke on "The Setting of Standards in General Practice". Dr Irvine began by emphasizing that there was a 15-year history of involvement of general practitioners in education in the Northern Region which had begun with vocational training. From this had sprung the idea that doctors who were engaged in vocational training had to look at their own clinical practice and its organization in order to teach.

The second main development had been the need to work in groups to achieve this and the Northern Region had found that to make the group process work it was necessary for the doctors concerned to have a continuing commitment.

The early standards were structural and mainly con-

cerned with practice organization. The groups had later moved on to look at the process of care. The current interest was in developing normative standards for several common conditions and trainer groups in the Northern Region had now found that there was a great need for more information. The main idea now being discussed was that standard setting could be studied, using the care of children as an example.

Dr Irvine noted that in his region external criteria had been developed for the selection of trainers. These reflected the current standards of the day as maintained by the trainers themselves.

Dr Irvine concluded by describing the new Division for General Practice within the Regional Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Newcastle. This was a new partnership between the College in the Northern Region and the local medical committees within the region. Structurally it resembled the Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice.

The Education Committee of this new Division had replaced the old general practice sub-committee of the regional postgraduate committee of the university and had responsibility for continuing medical education and setting standards for care in general practice, as well as vocational training.

Dr Geoffrey Marsh

Dr Geoffrey Marsh, General Practitioner, Norton, Cleveland and Wolfson Professor of the Royal College of General Practitioners, spoke on "Producing a Healthy Child". Dr Marsh presented an obstetric audit carried out in his own practice and showed that the perinatal mortality of his own patients during several consecutive years had averaged at 10·1. This was con-