

## References

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## Research in general practice

THIS *Journal* is devoted primarily to publishing the results of research in general practice. The amount of research in general practice is growing quickly, partly because there is much more interest and activity among general practitioners themselves, partly because an increasing number of vocational trainees are carrying out research projects of various kinds, but also because scientists in other disciplines, notably the medical sociologists, are taking a keen interest in the different aspects of primary health care, especially the work of the general practitioner.

The promotion of research has always been one of the principal activities of the Royal College of General Practitioners, and the Research Committee was one of the earliest parts of the College to get going. The challenge and struggle to develop research was all the greater because general practice had no long tradition in this activity, and many practitioners quite needlessly felt guilty and ill-equipped for the task.

The Birmingham Research Unit pioneered the idea, and its development of the simple tools such as age/sex registers, diagnostic indexes, with a profusion of simple, practical advice, has done much to spread ideas, not just in the United Kingdom but around the world. Many of the much more elaborate research studies mounted by the College's other units at Dundee, Manchester, Surrey, and Swansea, have followed from the early steps trodden at Birmingham.

Eimerl and Laidlaw's (1969) *Handbook for Research in General Practice* has for some time been the best known of the books on research in general practice and was a valuable introduction to the subject. Inevitably, time has moved on and the growing wealth of research

experience and changing technology makes it appropriate for a new book to be published on this important subject. It is therefore a pleasure to welcome the publication of *Research in General Practice* by Professor J. G. R. Howie who has recently been appointed to the James Mackenzie Chair of General Practice at the University of Edinburgh. Professor Howie has himself made a particularly distinguished contribution to general practice research, and is known for the painstaking thoroughness of his work carried out at Aberdeen and for tackling some particularly difficult subjects, such as the approach to and management of some upper respiratory tract infections in general practice.

His book is in four parts: "Thinking about Research", "Doing Research", "Looking at Results", and "Telling about Research". It is written in a clear and entertaining style with a minimum of jargon, and covers the ground well in under 200 pages.

*Research in General Practice* can be warmly recommended for general practitioners and trainees interested in research and projects in general practice. Its only problem is its price, and it is to be hoped that demand for this new book will be such that future editions will become possible at a more reasonable price.

## Reference

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## Education for Co-operation in Health and Social Work

IT is generally agreed that the focus of care should, if possible, move away from institutions towards the community, away from bureaucratic buildings, whenever possible, and into the home.

The impact, however, on those professionals who work primarily in the community has not yet been measured and the skills and resources needed to help

patients and clients with their problems is gradually being investigated.

For many years there have been a number of professions concerned with aspects of this work, and four of them through their training bodies have now come together for the first time to explore the difficulties and the dangers, the hopes and possibilities, of working