
COLLEGE NEWS

JOURNAL CORRESPONDENCE

Dr S. L. Barley, MRCP, takes office as Editor of the *Journal* on 1 January 1981 and all correspondents to the *Journal* are asked to note the new address of the *Journal* office to which they should write after that date. Letters and communications should be sent to the Editor, 30 Endcliffe Crescent, Sheffield S10 3ED. (Telephone: 0742-681 836).

RESEARCH DIVISION AND THAMES VALLEY FACULTY

On 16 May 1980 the Thames Valley Faculty held a research symposium which was associated with a meeting of the Research Division of the College, and members of the Research Division participated in the morning session and held one of their own meetings in the afternoon. This was the first time the Research Division had met outside Princes Gate and it provided an important stimulus to the Faculty and locally based research.

A reception held in association with the meeting included the President, Dr J. P. Horder, and Mrs Horder as guests of honour. The symposium was well attended and included a series of presentations on asthma in general practice, psychotropic prescribing, referrals and counselling in general practice, and geriatric monitoring in general practice.

The afternoon session included a number of presentations on methods of analysing data from general practice, including punch card systems, feature card systems, and machine-punched cards.

Further papers were read on the diagnosis, prognosis, and outcome in general practice, and the use of a computer.

The whole day was unique in the history of the Thames Valley Faculty as it was wholly resourced by general practitioners.

DATA HANDLING IN PRIMARY CARE

A symposium entitled "Data Handling in Primary Care" is being organized by the Scottish General Practice Research Support Unit, consisting of an exhibition during the week of 24 November and a two-day course on Thursday and Friday, 27 and 28 November. The aim of the exhibition is to increase medical awareness of computer activity in primary care, and topics covered by the course will include an introduction to computer technology, a session on computers and hard copy, and the use of computers in practice administration, audit, and research. Further information can be obtained from Dr M. W. Whitley, University Department of General Practice, 166 Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4DR.

EXHIBITION ROOM

A display of photographs of members and fellows of the Royal College of General Practitioners, taken by Dr I. Cookson of Gloucester, has been mounted for one month.

Practice activity analysis is shown in a special format. Visitors are invited to take samples of any analysis they would

like to pursue.

The Practice Organization Study continues to reveal different facets of highly organized practices. Any College member who would be prepared to fill in one of the questionnaires would greatly help this study.

A mock-up of the general practitioner's office shows various organizational improvements which any general practitioner may find useful.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE JOURNAL

Because of the expense of storing back numbers of the *Journal*, it has been decided to reduce the stocks of back issues which are being held by the College. For a limited period of two months, from 1 November to 31 December 1980 inclusive, readers of the *Journal* are invited to send for back numbers to complete their sets. These will be supplied, when available, free of charge, provided a suitable sized envelope is supplied, pre-addressed and stamped with 26p postage per *Journal*, from 14 Princes Gate, London SW7 1PU.

DEATHS

H. H. A. Elder
Purley, Surrey
G. I. Harding
Hanworth, Middlesex
John Hendrie
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
C. R. McCallum
Darley, Harrogate, Yorkshire
Barbara Sandell
Babraham, Cambridge

MEDICAL NEWS

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND

At the meeting of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in July 1980, Sir Alan Parks of London and St Mark's Hospital was elected President in succession to Sir Reginald Murley.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Professor N. C. H. Stott, FRCP, Edin, MRCP, Professor of Primary Medical Care, will be leaving the University of Southampton in the autumn of 1980 after taking up his appointment there on 1 January 1980.

It is understood that Professor Stott hopes to be joining a practice in Wessex towards the end of the year.

OXFORD REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

The Oxford Regional Health Authority has seconded Dr E. Rosemary Rue, CBE,

FRCP, FFCM, FRC.PSYCH, Regional Medical Officer for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, as Head of the Department of Community Health on a one to two year basis. She is working full time for the first six months and part time afterwards. She took up her appointment on 15 September 1980.

HONORARY DEGREES

It has recently been discovered that in July 1977 the University of Bristol conferred two honorary degrees on general practitioners. It is thought this is the first time that two British practitioners have received honorary degrees from any university in the British Isles on the same occasion.

Dr Victoria Tryon

The public oration for Dr Victoria Tryon was delivered by Professor Perry in July 1977. He noted that she had been admitted to the University of Bristol in 1917, the first time that a group of women had entered the medical school together. She had been elected President of the Guild of Undergraduates in 1918, had graduated in 1922, and was appointed for the first time as a house surgeon at the general hospital.

The honorary degree was awarded for Dr Tryon's "dedicated and devoted work as a general practitioner, which had been an example and inspiration to all her colleagues and had won their friendship, affection and trust." She had taken a particular interest in midwifery and had "always cared for her patients with great competence, unremitting care, and compassion, especially for the old and lonely."

In 1951 she was elected the first woman President of the Bristol Medico-Chirurgical Society and her Presidential address was on "Women in Medicine". Dr Tryon's dedicated and devoted work had done much to establish the place of women in the medical profession in the eyes of both colleagues and patients, and she was awarded the degree of Master of Arts, *honoris causa*.

Dr Tryon died earlier this year.

Lord Pitt

On the same day, Professor Banton commended The Lord Pitt of Hampstead, who came from the Caribbean and graduated from Edinburgh in 1938. After working as a salaried medical officer in the West Indies and becoming one of the founders of the West Indian National party he was honoured by the Government of Trinidad with the order of the Trinity Cross for his services to

the West Indies. He had returned to Britain in 1947 and started general practice in London, where he combined his medical work with an active political career; at one point he had a list of 3,500 people, worked single handed, and was also a magistrate. He was subsequently appointed a hereditary member of the House of Lords, and from 1968 until 1977 was Deputy Chairman and then Chairman of the Greater London Council.

The Lord Pitt was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

Dr R. Lewis Miller, B.SC, MD, MRCP, DRCOG, who has been a senior lecturer in the Department of General Practice since February 1977, resigned on 31 May 1980 and has returned to single-handed National Health Service practice as a principal.

The University has now appointed Dr J. R. McCluggage, MRCP, DRCOG, who has been a principal in general practice since 1967. Dr McCluggage has been a course organizer in the Northern Ireland Vocational Training Scheme since 1975 and a part-time lecturer in the Department since 1978.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING

A large majority of members of the Royal College of Nursing have voted against any form of industrial action to be taken by the College.

In answer to the question: "Do you endorse the Royal College of Nursing's policy against taking strike action?", 44,835 members answered "Yes" and 5,685 said "No".

In response to question 2: "Do you endorse the Royal College of Nursing's policy against taking any other form of industrial action?", 36,556 members voted "Yes" and 13,982 members voted "No".

The Royal College of Nursing's traditional policy is "That because of the commitment nurses voluntarily accept in qualifying and practising as members of the nursing profession, they should not withdraw their labour as such action is a violation of their commitment to those in their care, and contrary to the professional ethic."

FAMILY MEDICINE LITERATURE INDEX

The Family Medicine Literature Index has been developed under the auspices

of the World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians (WONCA), in co-operation with the National Library of Medicine (USA).

It consists of a quarterly index with an annual cumulation and contains two sections. One is a Medlars subject and author section providing the family medicine references from the Medlars data base. The second is a supplement index and author section providing references to non-*Index Medicus* family practice journals. Both the Medlars and the supplement sections are based on abridged *Index Medicus* format.

The subscriptions can be obtained from \$50 a year, and enquiries and cheques should be made payable to the College of Family Physicians of Canada, 4000 Leslie Street, Willowdale, Canada M2K 2R9.

HEALTH SERVICES ACT 1980

The Health Services Act 1980 received the Royal Assent on 8 August 1980. This Act abolishes the four-year-old Health Services Board which had the task of phasing out pay beds. The Secretary of State now takes over the Health Services Board's powers to control the development of the private health sector.

This Act gives the Government the ability to simplify the structure of the National Health Service in England by replacing the present area health authorities by more locally responsive district health authorities. This new structure should be completed by April 1983.

Health authorities receive powers under the Act to engage in voluntary fund-raising activities to supplement their National Health Service financial allocations.

The powers of the General Practice Finance Corporation will be increased.

DRUG AND THERAPEUTICS BULLETIN

The Department of Health and Social Security have agreed to distribute *Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin* free of charge to every National Health Service doctor with effect from the autumn of 1980.

HEALTH STATISTICS IN BRITAIN

Statistics Users Conferences were inaugurated in 1970 by the Standing Committee of Statistics Users, an indepen-

dent committee comprising representatives of a wide range of organizations with a special interest in statistics.

The 1980 Conference will be held at the Royal Society, London SW1 on Friday, 12 December. It will be the first in the series to take health as its theme. The papers will review critically a wide range of health statistics and explore desirable future developments.

Full details can be obtained from the conference secretary, Dr Ian Russell, Medical Care Research Unit, 21 Claremont Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4AA.

MEDISCENE

MediScene is the new journal of the Overseas Doctors' Association in the UK, and its first issue was published in July 1980.

The first issue includes an article by Patrick Jenkin, MP, Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Security, in which he writes that he "wants to see more overseas doctors taking a full part in the management of the National Health Service."

Further information can be obtained from the Editor, Dr Derek Meakin, Europress Limited, 68 Chester Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire.

OMBUDSMAN

Mr Cecil Clothier, QC, the Health Service Ombudsman, in his Annual Report for 1979/80 published in July 1980,

suggested that his power should be extended so that he can start an investigation into an administrative failure of his own accord.

ENGLISH BOARD FOR NURSING, MIDWIFERY AND HEALTH VISITING

Dr Gerard Vaughan, Minister of Health, has announced the appointment of Professor Baroness McFarlane of Llandaff as Chairman of the English Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting, which was established on 15 September 1980. The Board is expected to have an innovative role in shaping the future organization of the education and training of nurses, midwives, and health visitors.

Baroness McFarlane, MA, M.Sc, SRN, SCM, HV, TUT. CERT., FRCN, is currently Professor and Head of the Department of Nursing at the University of Manchester. She is also Chairman of the Joint Board of Clinical Nursing Studies. She was formerly a member of the Royal Commission on the National Health Service.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY

The Multiple Sclerosis Society has issued a new leaflet *So You Have Multiple Sclerosis?* This is available, free of charge, on request to the Multiple Sclerosis Society, 286 Munster Road, Fulham, London SW6 6BE. Copies can also be obtained from branches throughout the United Kingdom.

GENERAL PRACTICE FINANCE CORPORATION

The General Practice Finance Corporation's Annual Report, issued in July 1980, reports a rising demand over the last two years for loans from doctors wishing to buy or improve surgery premises.

The Corporation made 180 loans, totalling more than four and a half million, to 346 NHS doctors in the financial year 1979/80.

Since it started in 1967, the Corporation has now made loans to over five and a half thousand doctors in Great Britain, lending over eight and a half million pounds during the last two years.

The new Health Services Bill empowers the Corporation to buy surgeries from doctors and lease them back. This file will be used, at least initially, in respect of new premises built, or adapted premises provided by groups of doctors. The Corporation hopes that this will enable more doctors who do not wish to undertake heavy capital commitments to practise from modern surgeries.

PRE-REGISTRATION POSTS

The house physician rotation in primary care was started at the University of Southampton on 1 February 1979, and six house physicians have now completed this appointment.

It is understood that pre-registration posts in primary care have recently been approved at St Mary's Hospital, London.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Lord Taylor of Harlow

FREQUENT USERS

Sir,
Dr R. M. McGregor of Hawick, whose obituary appeared in your issue of August 1980 (p. 510), made a discovery of outstanding importance. As a result of a survey of over 11,000 doctor/patient contacts, he showed that 15 per cent of his patients were responsible for over 47 per cent of the illnesses he saw in the course of a year (McGregor, 1950). Three years later, at the Royal Society of Medicine (McGregor, 1953), he showed that the accident-prone patients in his practice were to a large extent also the illness-prone.

He thus, for the first time, isolated

the 'weaker brethren', who are indeed both physiologically and psychologically less capable of resisting the slings and arrows which fall upon all of us. In *Good General Practice* (Taylor, 1954) I called these people the "multiple-ailment heavy burden patients" and gave a preliminary description of them (pp. 420-423). As far as I know Dr McGregor's pioneer work has not been followed up. Here, surely, is a job waiting for the descriptive clinicians and epidemiologists of the College. Are we (the patients) made that way? Or is it our early training? Or is it a neat balance of a little of each? Sooner or later, the pathologists and biochemists will have to come in, but first the accurate natural history of these patients must be recorded, compared, and described

fully. Meanwhile, Dr McGregor deserves a permanent place in the College's Hall of Fame for these outstanding observations.

TAYLOR OF HARLOW

Plas-y-Garth
Glyn Ceiriog
Nr Llangollen
North Wales.

References

- McGregor, R. M. (1950). The work of a family doctor. *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, 57, 433-453.
- McGregor, R. M. (1953). The accident-prone in general practice. *British Medical Journal*, 2, 1306-1308.
- Taylor, S. (1954). *Good General Practice*. London: Oxford University Press.