

MRCGP EXAMINATIONS

The dates for the next MRCGP examinations are as follows:

May/July 1982

Written papers: Tuesday, 11 May 1982.
Orals: In Edinburgh during the week ending 26 June and in London during the week ending 3 July 1982.
Closing date: Thursday, 11 March 1982.

October/December 1982

Written papers: Tuesday, 26 October 1982.

Orals: In Edinburgh and London during the week ending 11 December 1982.
Closing date: 2 September 1982.

The written papers will be held in London, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Exeter, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Cardiff, Belfast and Dublin. These and other centres may be used as required, subject to a minimum (and in some centres 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 as follows:

Application fee	£125.00
Re-application fee	£ 93.75

Candidates withdrawing from the examination after the closing date for applications forfeit 40 per cent of the full fee.

Application forms may be obtained from the Examination Administrator at the College.

MEDICAL NEWS

PATIENTS' COMPLAINTS

A survey carried out for the National Consumer Council showed that, out of 1,560 people who had visited a general practitioner in the previous 12 months, five per cent had wanted to complain about some aspect of their treatment—but none of them had.

The reasons they gave for not complaining were mainly: fear of retaliation, the worry that it would take too much time and effort, and the belief that nothing would be done about the complaint anyway. A full report will be published by the NCC later in 1981.

AN INFORMATION PACKAGE ON LOW VISION AIDS

The Flying Suitcase is an information and training package designed for professional use which has been researched and put together by the Disabled Living Foundation and financed by the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.

The DLF has found that many partially sighted people can be helped by low vision aids but that their professional advisers are often unaware of the existing range.

The package (which can be hired at a cost of £30.00) consists of low vision aids, both those available over the counter and those available on prescription, a set of slides of the aids, additional slides showing aids in use, lecturers' notes for a lecture/demonstration, and a set of information lists including manufacturers' names and addresses, Low Vision Aids Clinics in the UK and sources of helpful advice. Everything is assembled in a fitted suitcase.

Further information is available from Mrs V. Scarr, Disabled Living Foundation, 346 Kensington High Street, London W14 8NS.

THE PROBLEM DRINKER AT WORK

The Health and Safety Executive has produced a small pamphlet outlining the problem of problem drinkers, and the policies that might be adopted to try and help them. The booklet costs £1.50, and is available from government and other bookshops.

OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT 1980/81

In his third report, Mr C. M. Clothier, the Health Service Commissioner, tells how he dealt with some of the 130 complaints about maladministration that fell within his remit. As he is unable to deal with matters of clinical judgement, the actions of general practitioners rarely come to his notice. Instances are given, however, where maternity and ambulance services have failed to function properly, and there are matters which are almost philosophical or ethical which all doctors will want to think about. How should we respond, for instance, in organizing medical care, to Mr Clothier's statement that if events are not as expected, "it will be those who demand most who will be most disappointed"?

Source: *Annual Report of the Health Service Commissioner 1980-1981*. London: HMSO.

MUSIC FOR THE PARTIALLY SIGHTED

The Disabled Living Foundation has produced an excellent leaflet with a lot of information about many aspects of music-making for those with visual handicaps. There are many addresses of organizations both in the UK and in

other countries. Nevertheless, the DLF ask their readers if they can help by sending further information about places which enlarge music, firms that produce large-print musical manuscript paper, ideas on music stands, rests and lighting, and other successful ideas. Requests for the leaflet, and helpful information, should go to Disabled Living Foundation, 346 Kensington High Street, London W14 8NS.

VIDEOTAPES ON MEDICAL ETHICS

Three programmes made by Granada Television and shown in 1980 have been put into the catalogue of Concord Films. They are called *Patient's Secrets*, *Doctor's Orders* and *A Matter of Life and Death*. They were highly acclaimed at the time, and cost £13.50 plus postage and VAT for one day. They are available in VHS, U-matic, Philips 1500 and Betamax formats, from Concord Video, 201 Felixstowe Road, Ipswich IP3 9BJ.

CHURCHILL TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIP

Churchill Travelling Fellowships are open to all UK citizens of any age or occupation, and since no educational or professional qualifications are needed, they are of special interest to people who would not be eligible for other types of grants (they are not normally given for academic studies).

The object of the awards is to enable those who would not otherwise have a chance, to gain a better understanding of the lives and work of people in countries overseas, and to bring back useful knowledge, skill and experience for the benefit of our community. About 100

awards are made annually, and there are now nearly 1,500 Churchill Fellows.

Grants are offered in different categories each year. Besides an open category for outstanding projects, there is one category of possible interest to general practitioners: research into the relief of pain.

Further details from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 15 Queen's Gate Terrace, London SW7 5PR.

RAYNER CUTS

As part of the Rayner review of the Government Statistical Service, a study team examining DHSS statistics has recommended the withdrawal of Form SBH1. This was a half-yearly return about the hospital service—bed usage, waiting lists, consultant activity and so on. In future this information will be collected and available only on a yearly basis.

HEARING AIDS

Continuing its five-year programme to extend and modernize the range of hearing aids available on the NHS, the DHSS recently announced that two models of a high-power behind-the-ear aid have been issued, and that more very high-power aids should be available by October 1981.

DONATION OF ORGANS FOR TRANSPLANT

Earlier this year plastic kidney donor cards and cardboard multi-organ donor cards were distributed to enable people to indicate that any, or specified, organs might be used for transplantation. These cards have been highly successful and a single donor card of similar size has now been produced in plastic.

THE CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE

The Children's Committee—set up in 1978 to advise the Government on "the co-ordination and development of health and personal social services as they relate to children and families with children"—is to be wound up in Octo-

ber 1981. The National Children's Bureau is to take on some of its work.

SELF-ASSESSMENT BOOKS

These books, for trainees (and others), which were described in a paper in this journal in December 1980, are now available from Dr N. J. Clemens, at 'Kenton', Sunny Avenue, Crawley Down Village, West Sussex RH10 4JL. The price is £16.00, and the books include enough paper for approximately one year's recording.

SCREENING FOR CRETINISM

The Joint Standing Sub-Committee on Screening in Medical Care has recommended, after considering all the clinical, organizational and financial implications, that health authorities should incorporate a screening programme to detect congenital hypothyroidism into their priorities for preventive medicine. Each test, which can be performed on the same sample of blood at present being taken to detect phenylketonuria, will cost about £1.00, and it should be possible to detect all cases at birth. With a birth rate of about 700,000, about 50 children per year should be saved from mental subnormality, and another 60 have their IQ considerably improved.

Source: DHSS Health Notice HN(81)20, June 1981.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER EDUCATION IN RHEUMATOLOGY

The Centre for Medical Education at the University of Dundee has received £54,000 from Pfizer Limited to develop a continuing education programme for general practitioners.

A core course will be organized which will emphasize practical management problems. Feedback to learners will be provided through the use of microcomputer technology. The course will be designed so that doctors may undertake it at home or at their practices at times suitable to them.

Further details from Professor R. M.

Harden, Centre for Medical Education, Ninewells Hospital and Medical School, Dundee.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Following the success of the last symposium in 1980, the Research Group of the Royal College of General Practitioners, Merseyside and North Wales Faculty, are organizing a similar event in December 1981.

General practitioners are asked to offer in the form of short papers (up to 10 minutes) any research work that they may be doing. A project does not have to be complete to be suitable for presentation.

Further details from Dr John Bligh, Lache Health Centre, Hawthorn Road, Chester. Tel: Chester 671991.

MEETINGS AND COURSES

Evaluation of Practice Methods

The Medical Institute, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. Saturday, 31 October 1981. A principal feature of the meeting will be the presentation of reviews of their work undertaken by general practitioners.

Details from Dr R. M. A. Moore, Shrewsbury Medical Institute, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (South), Mytton Oak Road, Shrewsbury SY3 8XF. Tel: Shrewsbury 52244.

Primary Care in Inner London

Saturday, 10 October, 09.30-16.30. Joint meeting of all the London faculties of the RCGP. Further details from James Scobie, Secretary, South London Faculty, 1 Gleebe Road, London SW13.

Choice in Childbirth

National Childbirth Trust, Silver Jubilee Conference. 10 October, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1.

General Practitioner Research Club

Next meeting 26 September, Oxford. Further details from Dr R. C. Fraser, Department of Community Health, University of Leicester, Clinical Sciences Building, Leicester Royal Infirmary, Leicester. Tel: 0533-551234, Ext. 522.