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## THE COLLEGE DIVISIONS

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### The Research Division

THE Research Division has the general responsibility for exploiting the unique facility for research inherent in the organization of primary care in the UK. It is worth restating three major advantages. First, general practitioners hold a virtually complete record of the provision of medical care to every patient by any part of the National Health Service. Secondly, that single record remains in operation throughout the person's life. Thirdly, because of the registration system, general practitioners can define the population for whom they are responsible for medical care, and this provides the basis for epidemiological studies.

Thus, research has always featured more prominently in the activities of our College than in the other Colleges, though some are now beginning to follow our example.

#### College Research Units

The College has six research units whose directors were all members of the old Research Division Executive. Because the new Executive will have much wider responsibilities, the co-ordination of the units' activities will now be effected through a new Directors' Committee, separate from the Executive. In addition, the directors will provide a written report of their activities for each Executive meeting. The College research units provide the necessary administrative structure through which the College can operate nationwide multi-observer projects.

#### Departments of General Practice and College Faculties

University Departments of General Practice have a responsibility for undertaking research, and the Division wishes to facilitate this activity in

every appropriate way. Most College faculties have research committees, and the Division will wish to encourage and promote research at faculty level.

#### General Practitioners

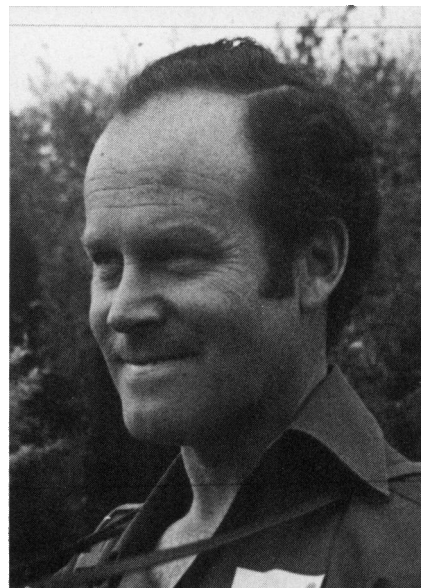
Few general practitioners have had formal training in research, and the Division will continue to provide advice on specific projects with the help of many experts throughout the UK. There is no doubt that much more formal training is needed and, as a result of the College Appeal, two full-time research training fellowships have so far been set up. However, responsibility for the promotion of education in research methods has, for administrative convenience, been incorporated within the Education Division.

#### Medicines Surveillance Centre

In order to implement the new policy of investigating drug efficacy and side-effects in general practice, the College has set up a limited company—the Medicines Surveillance Centre Ltd (MSC). MSC will undertake drug trials and post-marketing surveillance when commissioned by pharmaceutical companies or government bodies from the UK or overseas. The College will countenance no research which does not incorporate the highest ethical standards. In order to ensure that these standards are met, an independent Clinical Trials Ethical Committee has been established under the distinguished chairmanship of Sir Eric Scowen, and every project promoted by the College must first receive the approval of this committee.

#### Computers

Responsibility for the methods whereby computers can be introduced into primary care will primarily be with the Division. Recommendations for policy are now being determined by a Computer Policy Group which is jointly



Dr C. R. Kay, Chairman of the Research Division

sponsored by the GMSC of the BMA, and the College. Both bodies have now accepted the recommendations of the group for a massive programme of research and development that will be required, and the implementation will be a major responsibility for the Research Division.

#### Funding

At the same time, the Division is attempting to define for the College other areas of research to which priority should be given. It is unfortunate that at a time when a major expansion of research activity can be justified we should be constrained by a serious shortage of funding. The Scientific Foundation Board which administers funds allocated from Appeal monies for the purpose of encouraging research (including research into educational methods) can make only a modest contribution in this respect. It can help to maintain the College research structure, to fund small projects in their entirety, and finance pilot studies to the stage at which they can be more appropriately presented to other funding organisations with more substantial resources.

cy and post-partum psychological disturbance. Preference will be given to research reports, but critical reviews and question-raising papers will also be considered.

Offers of papers should be sent to C. J. G. Macy, Acting Secretary, SRNP, c/o South Lincolnshire Dept of Psychology, Orchard House, South Rauceby, Sleaford, Lincs., from whom details of membership and of the conference may also be obtained.

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## MEDICAL NEWS

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### Meetings and Courses

*Society for Reproductive and Neonatal Psychology*

The Society for Reproductive and Neonatal Psychology will hold a con-

ference at the University of York 27-28 September 1982.

Papers are invited related to psychological aspects of fertility and infertility, pregnancy, childbirth, early mother-child relationships, early infan-