
MEDICAL NEWS

Meetings and Courses

Contemporary Issues in Mental Health

Advance notice and call for papers for a two-day multidisciplinary conference focusing on recent developments and directions in the provision of care for the mentally ill. The conference will be held at Imperial College, London, on 21 and 22 April 1983. Topics will include: primary health care, access to services, innovations in community treatment, evaluation of new patterns of care, unemployment and mental health, changing professional roles, transcultural themes and medical psychology. For details contact: Richard Coleman, CIMH Secretary, Claybury Hospital, Woodford Bridge, Essex.

Towards Better General Practice

A residential course to be held at New College, Oxford, 17-20 April 1983. Apply to Mrs M. Wolfson, 5 Tyebeck Court, Kingsthorpe, Northampton.

The Clinical Basis of General Practice

A residential course to be held at the Cripps Postgraduate Centre, North-

ampton, from 1-5 November 1982. Apply to Mrs V. Benstead, Cripps Centre, Northampton General Hospital.

Down's Syndrome: Let's be Positive

One-day conference at the Association of Professions for the Mentally Handicapped, 123 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF. Applications, by October 15, to Miss A. F. Whittaker.

People in the News

Professor Marshall Marinker, of Leicester University, has had conferred on him an honorary MD by the University of Tampere, Finland. He has also been appointed Director of the MSD Foundation, in succession to Mr Karl Sabogh. Professor Marinker will take up his post later this year.

Mycoplasma pneumoniae Infections

In one of its periodic reviews the *Communicable Disease Report* (CDR 82/26,

2 July 1982) recounts the surveillance of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infections up to mid-1982. Infections in the UK with this organism, the importance of which has lately been debated in the *Journal* (McSherry, J. A., January 1981, page 49 and subsequent correspondence), tend to occur in four-yearly cycles, the last being in 1978-79. That outbreak was heralded by an odd 'early warning' in 1977-78, just before the main epidemic; the rate has now been rising since mid-1981, and in the whole of that year 1,062 cases were reported to the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre. The peak incidence was in children aged 5-9 years, but those in the age group of their parents (25-44 years) show another, smaller rise. Only one person, a boy of four, is thought to have died from the disease, and only 7 per cent had upper respiratory symptoms. On the other hand, 75 per cent of the patients had lower respiratory tract infections.

MD Thesis

Dr David R Hannay of the Department of General Practice at Glasgow has recently been awarded his MD from the University of Cambridge for a thesis on "A comparative study of family medicine at McMaster and Glasgow Universities."

Journal, page 504). This is a gut feeling which I am sure most principals have had over the years. I agree with him that there is no suitable word; maybe it includes the term GPSHO. In my opinion the word registrar in general practice would perhaps be more suitable and will not cause either confusion or be felt by the young doctor as derisive.

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Sir,
I could not agree more with Dr Elliott-Binns in the August *Journal* (page 504) that the term trainee should be scrapped. However, I was amazed that he did not even mention GP Registrar as an alternative. Registrar is more appropriate and less cumbersome than GPSHO. The entire medical profession and many patients will recognize it as referring to a doctor in the latter stages of his or her formal training, and it is

LETTERS

Dependence

Sir,
In your August issue (page 463) Mr Ivan Illich pleads that people free themselves from dependence on doctors. In a letter at the end of the *Journal*, Dr S. D. Ford (page 516) complains of feeling "wounded" when a lady patient transfers to another doctor. Perhaps it is time, too, that doctors freed themselves from dependence on patients? Dr Ford's patient may well have deserted because she found a doctor she thought more skilful or liked better. It is a bit much to suggest that her reasons for making the change should be "audited". She has presumably got enough of her own problems to bother about without being burdened by Dr Ford's.

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A Fortunate Man

Sir,
I understand that some doctors have had difficulty in obtaining a copy of this book, which was reviewed in your August 1982 issue (page 505). The Exeter Trainers' Workshop has recently discussed the problem at one of its meetings and members were able to obtain it from Macdonald and Evans, Estover Road, Plymouth PL6 7PZ.

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Why Not Scrap the Word 'Trainee'?

Sir,
I was interested to read the article written by Dr C. P. Elliott-Binns (August