

Child Abuse: A Study of Enquiry Reports 1973 to 1981

The aim of this study was to identify common themes in reports of eighteen enquiries into cases of child abuse over the past ten years, and to identify lessons for professional practice. The

study highlighted how ignorance or misunderstanding of the functions of other professions can hamper effective work, and emphasized the need for arrangements that facilitate the exchange of information. The study also emphasized how often allegations of

abuse by members of the public turn out to be well-founded. It recommended that such allegations should always be taken seriously and investigated urgently.

Copies of the study can be obtained from HMSO—price £2.95.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The International Medical Commission

In September 1980 a group of doctors, nurses and lawyers met in Geneva to consider the creation of an International Medical Commission concerned with human rights. They identified a need for an independent body with sufficient influence and respect within the medical profession to be a rallying point for action in defence of human rights, to provide mutual support and to uphold high ethical standards. A preparatory committee was set up to pave the way for the Commission which will be formally established this year. This Committee is based in Geneva and its chairman is Dr Arnt Meyer-Lie of Sweden.

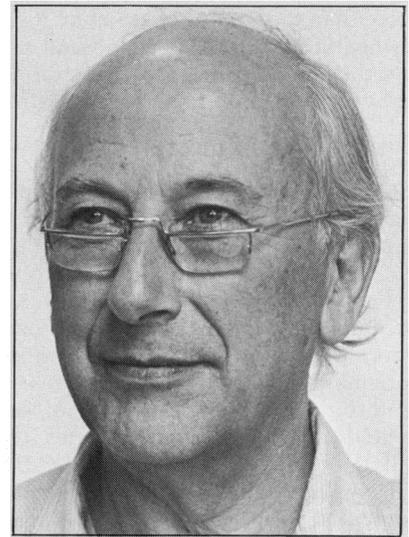
The aims of the International Medical Commission will be to secure the active support of doctors and other health workers throughout the world in the promotion and protection of human rights, and to encourage their personal involvement and commitment in a spirit of solidarity across national,

political and other boundaries.

Its work will be directed towards three objectives:

1. To secure observance of human rights principles in all interactions in health systems and other systems.
2. To promote observance of accepted codes of medical ethics in a changing world.
3. To promote the right to health for all.

A detailed statement of the activities of the Commission can be obtained from the Preparatory Committee for the International Medical Commission, PO Box 105, 1225 Chene-Bourg, Geneva, Switzerland.



Professor Jan van Es

Professor Jan van Es

We are pleased to report that Jan van Es, who recently retired as Professor of General Practice at Utrecht, has recently received the Orde van De Nederlandse Leeuw, which is the Dutch

equivalent of a knighthood. This will be welcome news to Professor van Es's many friends in the UK. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the College in 1967, and was a member of the original Leeuwenhorst Group, founded in 1974.

REPORT

Patients and the College

Report of a Working Party of the Communications Division—For Wider Consultation.

"The College, both centrally and peripherally, needs to develop closer links with patients so that their needs can be heard more clearly."

Council Minute 43(c). March 1981

Introduction

IN recent years the voice of users has featured increasingly in the provision of health services. One example has been the evolution of patient participation groups in general practice, described in Occasional Paper 17. John Horder, writing in the Introduction, said: "It reflects poorly on medical care, as we provide it, that patient participation should need promotion. It betrays a world divided into consumers and providers, when the alternative is for the

consumer to be the first provider: a world in which the providers plant a protective hedge round their garden, where no hedge is needed, a world where expertise flowers, a special language is talked, and trained people enjoy special privileges and feel different; the weeds in the hedge are misunderstanding and mistrust."

In this paper we have used the words 'patient' and 'doctor', because we could not find others more appropriate. Nevertheless there is the danger that these words will be identified with certain traditional values, where the patient

The members of the Working Party are Anne Crerar, John Hasler, John Horder, Sue Jenkins, Ray Jobling, Peter Pritchard, Jean Robinson and Bill Styles.