

H. A. Thomas, FRCGP

Dr Henry Anthony Thomas, formerly the senior partner in group practice in Cardiff, died on 7 August 1984 at Llandough Hospital after a brief illness. He was 70 years of age. 'Tony', as he was affectionately called by all who knew him intimately, was born at Sketty, Swansea. Educated at Wycliffe College, Gloucester, he entered Guy's Hospital, London, in 1934 and qualified MRCS, LRCP in 1940. After several house appointments at Guy's, Tony joined the Royal Army Medical Corps, and after initial training at Crookham was appointed medical officer to the Gordon Highlanders. Subsequently, after a short period with a reconnaissance unit in Scarborough, he was posted overseas. He served in Madagascar, East Africa and British Somaliland for nearly four years. In 1945 he was promoted to the rank of major and CO of the Special Treatment Hospital, Somaliland. On demobilization he spent some time in rural practice in the Vale of Glamorgan, residing in Cowbridge. Later, he became a partner to Dr Morgan Williams, Ely, Cardiff and on his death he took over as senior partner.

That Tony was a highly respected physician is reflected by his appointments to fellowships of the Royal College of General Practitioners and the British Medical Association. He had a thorough grasp of the clinical, administrative and medicopolitical aspects of his calling. He was for many years a clinical assistant in the Department of Venereology at the Cardiff Royal Infirmary, and it is therefore not surprising that he based his Presidential Address to the Cardiff Medical Society on his vast experience in this specialty. Prominent in the activities of the British Medical Association, he was a past Secretary and Chairman of the Cardiff Division, offices which he held with distinction. Long associated with the political aspects of general practice, he was Secretary, then Chairman of the Local Medical Committee. It was in this field that he was able to display his diplomacy and wisdom in solving delicate and difficult problems. Latterly, his sound advice was sought by the local Family Practitioner Committee as negotiator in contentious issues in the day-to-day running of the Health Service in South East Glamorgan. His overall contribution to general practice was immense. He played a considerable part in the training and teaching programme of young Cardiff students and doctors in association with both the Welsh National School of Medicine and the Royal College of General Practitioners. As a fitting end to his distinguished career he was personally responsible for developing new group-practice premises in Ely for the benefit of his patients whom he served with compassion and devotion for 36 years. This building stands as a permanent memorial to a man who provided the highest standards both as a healer and a comforter.

Tony was essentially a family man who appreciated to the full the rustic way of life at Llysworney. Whether it

involved chairing a parish meeting, actively participating in the annual best-kept village competition or church fête, or diligently attending to his garden, he never spared himself. In all this he was, unobtrusively, the gentleman who led by example. By nature he was quiet and reserved but in private conversation he soon revealed the extent of his knowledge not only relating to literature and music, which were among his greatest loves, but also his mastery of the art of the family physician which made him the doyen of Cardiff doctors. It is noteworthy that, accompanied by his wife Nina, he used to delight in making yearly visits to the Aldeburgh Musical Festival. Above all, he was a true Christian and generously supported his parish church in every possible way. He will be sadly missed by all his medical colleagues and friends, his patients, the residents of Llysworney and, not least, his family. To Nina, his two children and four grandchildren we extend our heartfelt sympathy in their overwhelming loss.

Effects of smoking on angina treatment

To determine whether cigarette smoking affects the results of drug treatment for angina, the authors studied 10 cigarette smokers with angina who were given placebo, nifedipine (60 mg per day), propranolol (240 mg per day) and atenolol (100 mg per day), each for one week. The four-week double-blind study was repeated with the same randomly determined order of drug sequences, after all 10 subjects had stopped smoking.

Before and after the subjects stopped smoking, all three drugs significantly reduced the frequency of angina, as measured with angina diaries, and improved the results of maximal exercise testing and 48-hour ambulatory monitoring of ST segments ($P < 0.01$). However, during the non-smoking phase of the study, there was an overall decline in the frequency of angina and an improvement in performance on exercise testing ($P < 0.05$) as compared with the smoking period, although the results of 48-hour ambulatory monitoring remained unchanged. The improvement after patients stopped smoking was greater during treatment with nifedipine than during administration of the other two drugs or placebo. Blood levels of propranolol were increased when patients stopped smoking; levels of nifedipine and atenolol were unchanged.

The data showed that smoking had direct and adverse effects on the heart and interfered with the efficacy of all three anti-anginal drugs, but with nifedipine the most.

Source: Deanfield J, Wright C, Krikler S, *et al.* Cigarette smoking and the treatment of angina with propranolol, atenolol, and nifedipine. *N Engl Med* 1984; 310: 951-954.