

HANDBOOK OF PREVENTIVE CARE FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Children form about a quarter of the population and good preventive care can save substantial disabilities. The General Medical Services Committee and the Royal College of General Practitioners have jointly published a handbook for preventive care of pre-school children and also designed record cards for use in general practice which fit both Lloyd George and A4 folders.

Good preventive care for children is becoming one of the hallmarks of modern general practice and this handbook sets out clearly and simply what should be done and why.

The *Handbook of Preventive Care for Pre-school Children* is available with two sample record cards, price £1.00 including postage, from the Information Service, Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, London SW7 1PU. The cards are also available separately from the same address at a cost of £3.00 per 100 plus £2.50 post and packaging for those fitting the Lloyd George envelopes and £8.50 per 100 plus £2.50 post and packaging for size A4.

PRESCRIBING — A SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT

Occasional Paper 24

General practitioner prescribing continues to attract attention, both in relation to quality and to costs. Quality concerns safety, relevance and effectiveness, while the cost of the average general practitioner's prescriptions now exceeds the cost of his income and expenses combined.

Prescribing — A Suitable Case for Treatment reports a study which examined both these factors. Prescriptions returned from the Prescription Pricing Authority were used to analyse the prescribing of a study group and of a group of matched controls; this was backed up by an educational programme involving discussions between members of the study group. The results suggest that with this kind of encouragement practitioners could reduce both the level and the cost of their prescribing.

Prescribing — A Suitable Case for Treatment, Occasional Paper 24, is available from the Publication Sales Office, Royal College of General Practitioners, 8 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JE, price £3.75, including postage. Payment should be made with order.

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION IN GENERAL PRACTICE

Occasional Paper 28

The General Medical Council is responsible for giving guidance to all medical schools about the content of courses leading to medical qualifications. Its recommendations are in fact much more clear and specific than is generally known and many highlight quite unambiguously the need for medical students to learn from general practice.

A working group of the Association of University Teachers in General Practice, United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland has studied the recommendations in detail and analysed the special contribution which general practice can play in meeting the GMC recommendations. Their comments will be invaluable in furthering discussions about departments of general practice in many universities.

Undergraduate Medical Education in General Practice, Occasional Paper 28, is available from the Publications Sales Office, Royal College of General Practitioners, 8 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JE, price £3.50 including postage. Payment should be made with order.

SOCIAL CLASS AND HEALTH STATUS: INEQUALITY OR DIFFERENCE

Occasional Paper 25

It has been known for many years that social class is a major determinant of health and death. What is not clear is how general practitioners respond to illness presented by patients in different social classes. Although the Black Report was unconvinced about differential response, Dr Donald Crombie in his important McConaghey Memorial Lecture provides new evidence that general practitioners actively compensate by providing more consultations and more care for patients in social classes 4 and 5.

This lecture gives the factual evidence and also provides striking tables showing that the variations of care between general practitioners is now greater than variation due to any obvious patient factor, including age, sex and social class; in other words the doctor is the most important variable in general medical practice.

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