

Arbejdet I En Almen Praksis (Work in a General Practice)—With a summary in English by JENS VILH DAHLERUP. Copenhagen. Costers Bogtrykkeri. 1962. Pp. ix + 235.

This report on a year's (1956) work in general practice in the Danish provincial town of Sønderborg makes interesting comparison with similar surveys in Britain. During the year 2,614 patients attended the author by reason of illness (i.e. excluding those attending exclusively for prophylactic procedures, certification, etc.) The consultation/visit ratio was 8/1—“ which reflects the author's desire to carry out as large a part of the work as possible in his surgery, with its better equipment for investigation and treatment ”. 8,689 prescriptions were issued and 2,108 injections were given in the course of the year—excluding prophylactic injections and local anaesthesia. For a period of 2 months no form of disinfection was used prior to injection and no sepsis resulted. In the author's opinion disinfection is often of less importance than the sterilization of syringes and needles. 339 “ minor operations ” were undertaken. The commonest were incision of abscesses, paronychia and furuncles, removal of foreign bodies from the eye, and the toilet and suture of wounds. Included under the heading of “ minor operations ” were 22 domiciliary confinements. The relatively small amount of obstetric work is explained by the existence of a special unit in the town, and it is stressed that all abnormal or anticipated abnormal deliveries should take place in hospital. One procedure undertaken by the author was cervical biopsy especially in cases of cervical erosion. He claims to have discovered 3 cases of cervical carcinoma *in situ* by this method. 138 general anaesthetics were given, trilene, in a cyprane inhalor, being the agent of choice. 586 patients were referred to specialists. Most (if not all) of these were to private specialists rather than to hospital outpatient departments and over half of the referrals were for diseases of the eyes or ear, nose, and throat. It is stated that the number of referrals to certain specialists would have been greater if these had been available in the town. This was specially true of specialists in neurology and psychiatry. 241 patients were referred for a total of 320 x-ray studies.

Forty-two patients were referred for x-ray therapy, the commonest being plantar warts in children, tenosynovitis and arthrosis in adults. Four hundred patients were admitted to hospital during the year.

The average daily work of the practitioner is worked out on a basis of 300 working days per year, and this means that on the average day he will give 34.9 consultations and do 5.8 visits. In the author's opinion this does not allow as much time to be given to the average patient as should be the case, and he suggests that if the work were reduced to half this would be reasonable. This would mean a maximum load per doctor of 1,000—1,500 patients.

While the detailed text is concealed from view to the non-Danish reader, it is encouraging to see in the extensive list of references, many British names ranging from Sydenham (1749) to Stephen Taylor (1955). The latter's *Good General Practice* is referred to in all 18 times. (Reference is also made to such College stalwarts as Pickles, Pinsent, Fry, and Hunt.)