

Correspondence

A Report by a Therapeutic Study Group

Sir,

The report by a Therapeutic Study Group published in the *Journal* of February, 1963 was not only most interesting, but reveals a glimpse of what can be achieved in an almost completely new branch of therapeutics. After reading the report, I was left with a number of questions which I would have liked to put to the authors.

I think they would probably agree, the improvement achieved in most of the cases was somewhat limited and in a few of a rather temporary nature. In two cases the religion of the patient was given though no subsequent comment was made and in case No. 2, where the question of confession arose, I thought it would have been most relevant. A final meeting was held at the home of a priest, the mention of which only arouses curiosity as to his opinion on the various cases.

My overall impression of the cases was that while they were improved, they were left with something vital lacking in their lives and I wonder if with the co-operation of the clergy, a more forceful rehabilitation to their lives could not be undertaken. I believe there would be some justification for our ministers who would possibly describe them as "ships without rudders".

It is my contention that a great deal more can be done for our patients by developing a greater co-operation between doctors and clergy. The South-east England Faculty had a meeting and discussion sometime ago called *Medicine and the Church* the tape recording of which I have been privileged to hear and would commend to all doctors. The enthusiasm of all who took part in that discussion showed the awareness of the need for such closer co-operation. The Natal Coastal Faculty intend to hold a symposium in June 1963 entitled *Religion and Medicine* which is to be on a rather wider basis to embrace the views of various religions and denominations and in the medical side to show that this aspect should not be confined to general practitioners only.

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DAVID MARTYN.

The Surgery

Sir,

I was interested in the Editorial on The Surgery in the *Journal*, February 1963. Yes, I am afraid "surgery" will remain for some time yet, but it is a thousand pities that the family doctor does not welcome the idea that he is consulted by his families and therefore he has his consulting rooms—even more so in many ways than the (hospital) consultant. Every doctor's room is or should aim to be a health "centre". Although the National Health Service Act mentioned health centres (which are in many places not even near the horizon yet), I would have hoped that the