

BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL

BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL
11 APRIL 1981
PUBLISHED WEEKLY
PUBLISHED FOR THE EDITOR
BY THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
11, BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON, W1P 8JD

SATURDAY 11 APRIL 1981

LEADING ARTICLES

Alcoholism: time for action	1177	Hazards of unemployment	1179
Does cimetidine cause gastric cancer?	1178	Brucellosis	1180

CLINICAL RESEARCH • PAPERS AND SHORT REPORTS • PRACTICE OBSERVED

Renal function in patients over 40 with homozygous sickle-cell disease	A G MORGAN, G R SERJEANT	1181
Rapid improvement in abnormal pulmonary epithelial permeability after stopping cigarettes	BARBARA D MINTY, C JORDAN, J G JONES	1183
Familial abnormality of erythrocyte cation transport in essential hypertension	K L WOODS, D G BEEVERS, MARGARET WEST	1186
Bacteriological colonisation of uterine cavity: role of tailed intrauterine contraceptive device		
RICHARD A SPARKS, BERNARD G A PURRIER, PETER J WATT, MAX ELSTEIN		1189
General practice compliance study: is it worth being a personal doctor?	P R A ETTLINGER, G K FREEMAN	1192
Effect of radiocontrast media on kidneys of patients with renal disease	A RAHIMI, R P S EDMONDSON, N F JONES	1194
Controlled trial of physiotherapy and occupational therapy for Parkinson's disease		
F B GIBBERD, N G R PAGE, K M SPENCER, E KINNEAR, J B HAWKSWORTH		1196
Raised serum haemolytic complement activity in glomerulonephritis: a bad prognostic sign		
H RASHID, P A E BIRD, T VERNAZZA, M SUSSMAN, A R MORLEY, D N S KERR		1196
Lecithin treatment in Friedreich's ataxia	BRIAN PENTLAND, CHRISTOPHER N MARTYN, CHRISTOPHER R STEER, JANICE E CHRISTIE	1197
Predictive value of paired plasma and serum viscosity in early rheumatic conditions		
G J M ALEXANDER, D R BLAKE, R L HOLMAN, P A BACON		1198
Audit at Work: The future	ROBIN C FRASER	1199
Sex Problems in Practice: Principles of managing sexual problems	ELIZABETH STANLEY	1200
Medical Records: IV—Medical records in a large practice	A J TULLOCH	1203

MEDICAL PRACTICE

Radioligand binding studies of adrenergic receptors and their clinical relevance	PETER J BARNES	1207
ABC of Blood Pressure Management: Detecting hypertensive patients	LIAM T BANNAN, D G BEEVERS, S H D JACKSON	1211
Overseas doctors: future training and employment	RICHARD SMITH	1214
Postmarketing surveillance of adverse drug reactions in general practice: II—Prescription-event monitoring at the University of Southampton	WILLIAM H W INMAN	1216
For Debate: Nuclear weapons proliferation, medicine's supreme challenge	JOHN A LORRAINE	1218
Letter from Chicago: Virgins of Delft	GEORGE DUNEA	1221
Lesson of the Week: How far down the duodenum?	JOHN C NICHOLLS, P A SMITH	1223
Dealing with the Disadvantaged: Bereavement	PADDY YORKSTONE	1224
Materia Non Medica—Contributions from	BARBARA PHILLIPS, W J M HOOD, PRADIP K DATTA	1225
Any Questions?		1217
Medicine and Books		1226
Personal View	C P ELLIOTT-BINNS	1230

CORRESPONDENCE—List of Contents	1231
---------------------------------------	------

OBITUARY	1243
----------------	------

NEWS AND NOTES

Views	1245
Epidemiology —Infection in hospitals P D MEERS	1246
Parliament: Mental aftercare; NHS dental and optical charges	1246
Medical News —New hope of seat-belt legislation	1247
BMA Notices	1248

ANNUAL REPORT OF COUNCIL

Pull-out section in centre of journal

SUPPLEMENT

The Week	1249
Letter from Westminster WILLIAM RUSSELL	1250
Structure and management of the NHS in Scotland	1251
Valuation of GPs' premises: Regional panels set up	1252
Social work inquiry: BMA's evidence	1254
National Insurance contributions 1981-2	1254
Unemployed doctors	1254

CORRESPONDENCE

Psychiatric research in medical perspective A C P Sims, FRCPsych; G H Jones, MRCPsych; J W Todd, FRCP..... 1231	Unilateral outward-turning leg in infancy Phyllis E Culley, MB; Diana A M Ernaelsteen, MB; Jill Poole, MB..... 1236	Tetracycline and benign intracranial hypertension D J Meacock, MRCP, and R L Hewer, FRCP; W S Hislop, MRCP; B N J Walters, FRACP, and S S Gubbay, FRACP..... 1240
The psychiatrically violent patient R W K Reeves, MRCPsych; E N Wardle, MD..... 1232	Left hand, right hand D Eccleston, FRCPsych, and others..... 1236	Evidence for a circulating sodium transport inhibitor in essential hypertension J G Kelly, PhD, and others..... 1241
Seat belt legislation J A MacLean..... 1232	Left and right T H Hughes-Davies, FRCP; T Norman, MB; B J Freedman, FRCP..... 1237	Dissatisfied patients R T Austin, FRCSed..... 1241
Breast cancer: a case for conservation W P Greening, FRCS; E A Benson, FRCS; A Y Rostom, FRCP, and R C Lallemand, FRCS; Joan Wagstaff, MB; A Green, FRCS... 1232	Staff problem in old people's homes P H Millard, FRCP, and R J Bailey, MRCP... 1237	Employment law M G Selson, MB..... 1241
Pelvic inflammatory disease and the intrauterine device R A Swallow, MRCP; M P Vessey, FRCPed, and others..... 1234	Toxoplasmosis F G Miskelly, MRCP; S Kernbaum, MD.... 1238	Abolish title of consultant? D M McClure, FRCPATH..... 1241
A plea for clinical epidemiology Sir John Brotherston, PFCM, and J Knowelden, FFCM..... 1234	Treatment for partial tears of the lateral ligament of the ankle O O A Oni, FRCSed, and S H Ahmad, FRCSed..... 1238	Private fees A Elliott, FRCPG..... 1241
Starting on prevention in practice K A Macdonald-Smith, MB..... 1234	Levodopa: long-term impact on Parkinson's disease D Matthews, MRCP, and others..... 1239	Related ancillary staff J G Ball, FRCPG..... 1241
Withholding treatment in infancy S J G Spencer, FRCPsych..... 1235	"A Whole New Medicine" B Richards, MB..... 1239	Index-linked pensions R D Rowlands, FRCS..... 1242
Congenital rubella affecting an infant whose mother had rubella antibodies before conception S R Preblud, MD, and others; Jennifer M Best, PhD, and others; T Johnstone, MB... 1235	Chest pain and cardiac arrest K M Porter, FRCS; R H Jones, MRCP; C D Korn, MRCS..... 1239	Protest against punishment by amputation W Norman-Taylor, MD..... 1242
	ABC of blood pressure reduction B A McGovern, MB..... 1240	Points Protest against punishment by amputation (P D Toon, J Pollert); "Medicine or Miracle?" (R Robinson); Leeches and swallows (C L Hewer)..... 1242
		Correction: Children born as a result of incest (Super)..... 1242

We may return unduly long letters to the author for shortening so that we can offer readers as wide a selection as possible. We receive so many letters each week that we have to omit some of them. Letters must be signed personally by all their authors. We cannot acknowledge their receipt unless a stamped addressed envelope or an international reply coupon is enclosed.

Correspondents should present their references in the Vancouver style (see examples in these columns). In particular, the names and initials of all authors must be given unless there are more than six, when only the first three should be given, followed by et al; and the first and last page numbers of articles and chapters should be included. Titles of papers are not, however, included in the correspondence section.

Psychiatric research in medical perspective

SIR,—Professor Michael Shepherd has argued for more research in psychiatry, better formulation of diagnostic concepts, and more work on the epidemiology of mental disorders. Following Vickers, he has recommended supporting those who have already produced successful research, providing better rewards for effective research, and increasing the number of people involved in research. With all these admirable ends we would wholeheartedly concur.

One would less readily agree, however, with his statement "that advances must be accounted meagre [in psychiatry] when measured by the standards achieved in most other branches of medical science." Clearly he considers that this deficiency in psychiatry has been long term, and he quotes the equally pessimistic statement of Sir Aubrey Lewis: "nor... have there been discoveries during the last 20 years comparable to those that have signalled the growth of therapeutics and surgery in other fields." The extraordinary thing about this latter comment was that it was written in 1963 at a time when psychiatric treatment was advancing more rapidly than

it had done for 150 years. The mental hospitals were beginning to empty; there was a dramatic decrease in the mean duration of inpatient stay; chlorpromazine had been introduced for the treatment of schizophrenia a few years before; the antidepressant drugs were just beginning to be used extensively; the national suicide rate was starting to decrease substantially; the effects of the 1959 Mental Health Act were changing professional opinion on the management of psychiatric illnesses, and this was having repercussions on the attitudes of society towards mental illness. Psychiatric research should be the servant of treatment and, although the quality of methodology might be called in question, the information on which these advances were made clearly served treatment faithfully.

It is impossible to estimate how what will be the long-term benefits from current psychiatric research. Research is less concentrated in a few centres of excellence and more evenly spread throughout the country than it has been in the past. Multidisciplinary research for psychiatry is essential. The vast body of

psychological research relevant to psychiatry seems to have been largely discounted by Professor Shepherd, who quotes in this context only Medawar's comment that psychoanalysis has been an impediment to the discovery of the true causes of mental illness. In practice, very few recently trained psychologists are psychoanalytic in their orientation. Psychiatrists should welcome collaboration with psychologists in research and they should also incorporate a more detailed knowledge of psychology into the specialist training of psychiatrists.

The major ingredient of Professor Shepherd's prescription is "the incorporation of a research training as a central component of psychiatric education." This aim is highly laudable provided that the word research is not interpreted too narrowly or confined too closely within the traditional medical perspective; it should include psychological and sociological research as well as the biological and epidemiological work which he approves. The Royal College of Psychiatrists has a research option as part of the membership