FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Quarterly and Divisional

14/15 November 1974: Autumn Quarterly Meeting at Institute of Psychiatry.

16 November 1974: Irish Divisional Meeting, Dublin.

22 November 1974: Welsh Division: Joint Meeting with Royal College of General Practitioners, Cardiff.

14 December 1974: Welsh Divisional Meeting, Morgannwg Hospital.

4/5 February 1975: Winter Quarterly Meeting, London.

Psychotherapy Section

The Psychotherapy Section will hold the following meetings:

8.15 p.m., Thursday 14 November: Mr. Paul Brown—'The Management of Out-patient Co-therapy for Sexual Dysfunction'. Wolfson Lecture Theatre, Institute of Psychiatry, De Crespigny Park, Denmark Hill, London, S.E.5.

8.15 p.m., Tuesday 10 December: Dr. Anthony Ryle—'Psychotherapy Research. The Value and Limitations of the Repertory Grid'. Room 8, Medical Society of London, 11 Chandos Street, London, W.1.

These meetings are open to all members of the College.

SURVEY OF OPINION ON THE RETENTION OF THE MEDICAL ASSISTANT OR SIMILAR NON-CONSULTANT CAREER GRADE IN PSYCHIATRY

1. The Manpower Sub-Committee of the Education Committee has been concerned about the future medical staffing structure in psychiatry, particularly with the future of the non-consultant medical grades, and whether there should be a place for a Medical Assistant or similar non-consultant career grade. A questionnaire was sent to all psychiatric consultants, and another questionnaire to all other grades of psychiatrists in order to obtain their views on this question. These questionnaires have now been analysed, and the detailed findings are presented.

2. *Replies from Questionnaires to Consultants.* Nine-hundred and thirty-one replies were received from psychiatric consultants, of whom there were just over 1,500 in the United Kingdom in 1973 (a response rate of 61 per cent). Four-fifths of the consultants who replied thought that there were a significant number of people in psychiatry who should hold medical assistant or similar career grade non-consultant posts. Three-quarters of the consultants who replied thought that if a trainee in psychiatry had a limited capacity for consultantship, but wished, and was able, to continue some career in the specialty he should accept a medical assistant post. Only 30 per cent of consultants thought that 'the presence of substantial numbers of a permanent non-consultant grade in whatever form in psychiatry would be detrimental to the specialty'. Sixty per cent disagreed with this statement. More than four-fifths of all consultants who replied thought that certain necessary clinical work in psychiatry was appropriate for staff in a medical assistant (non-consultant) capacity. The replies from the consultants are analysed more fully in the tables.

3. *Replies from Non-Consultants.* Over 1,800 questionnaires were distributed, and there were 862 replies. (In 1973 there were nearly 2,000 doctors in non-consultant grades as psycniatrists in the N.H.S. and 748 (241 whole-time equivalents) in the Clinical Assistant grade in England and Wales.) Most of those who replied stated that they intended to make a career in psychiatry. About 90 per cent of senior registrars to whom questionnaires were sent replied, a smaller number of registrars (about 50 per cent), there was a poor return from S.H.Os (about 20 per cent), but this had been expected, as the majority of these doctors are at an early stage in their career and often moving from one hospital to another. One-hundred and ninety-one medical assistants replied, and also 94 clinical assistants. Of those who were not already medical assistants more than half stated that they would under no circumstances accept a career grade non-consultant post such as a medical assistant.

4. There were marked differences in the replies from different groups. The most striking finding was that relatively more women who had graduated in the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland stated they would consider a career grade in a non-consultant post and were less likely to consider emigration. Three-hundred and fifty-two doctors said they would under no circumstances accept a career grade as a medical assistant, compared with 297 (of whom 154 said 'reluctantly') that they would accept such a grade. However, 111 women graduating as above

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