RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Report on Research supported by Regional Boards

With the advent of the customer-contractor principle in centrally funded research, psychiatrists working on their own or in small groups may well be looking for local sources of funds to support research. Recently the Research Committee received the report of its Working Party on 'Training in Research Methods', and in particular noted with interest the list of supported research projects which we receive from the Oxford Regional Hospital Board. It was particularly striking that between 40 and 50% of the decentralized Exchequer funds were allocated by the Clinical Research Committee of the Oxford R.H.B. to psychiatry, and the Working Party thought that the policies of Oxford R.H.B. might well serve as a model for other Regional Hospital Boards. Accordingly the Research Committee decided to approach the Senior Administrative Medical Officers of each Regional Board in order to discover how much each Board spent in total on research, and what proportion of this money was spent on research in psychiatry. We also asked S.A.M.O.'s to tell us if they ever had to refuse applications for research in psychiatry. The results of this investigation are now complete and are given in the Table.

It can be seen that there is an enormous range both in the total amount of monies each Board expends on research and in the proportion devoted to psychiatry. While some Boards, such as Oxford, Birmingham and the South West Metropolitan devote a substantial proportion of their monies to research in psychiatry, others spend a much smaller proportion, yet they tell us that they never have to refuse research applications. One S.A.M.O. writes 'The Board's Research Committee is extremely sympathetic towards psychiatric schemes and almost invariably awards them a high priority; the fact that these schemes currently account for only 5% of the allocation is due to shortage of applications and not to refusals'. Another provincial S.A.M.O. writes 'In my personal opinion the problem in psychiatry in relation to research lies in the stimulation of an interest in research and the putting forward of a greater number of projects from District and University Hospitals'. It would appear that in many areas of the country Regional Board funds are being underused by psychiatrists wishing to start research projects, and the Research Committee thought that these facts should be brought to the attention of the membership.

D. P. GOLDBERG

Secretary, Research Committee

TABLE

Psychiatric Research supported by funds from Regional Boards

Summary of replies from senior administrative medical officers

Regional board	Total expenditure on research	Expenditure on psychiatric research	Research applications refused
	£	£	
England and Wales			
Welsh	100,000	10,000*	2 projects deferred
Liverpool	72,100	5,750	Very rarely
Oxford	64,500	26,140	Rarely
Birmingham	60,000	18,325	None
Newcastle (RHB)	59,232*	8,227*	None
(UHMC)	65,350*	2,251*	None
Leeds	39,829	2,090	Less than 5% of total
South Western	36,188*	1,267*	None
South East Met.	36,000	3,661	Not stated
Wessex	35,000	4,200	None
North West Met.	33,500	1,500	None
North East Met.	31,125	4,233	Rarely
Manchester	29,981	1,950	None
South West Met.	29,000	14,511	None
East Anglian	26,000	2,600	None
Sheffield	22,199	4,369	None
Scotland			
Northern	4,195	2,500	None (full research fund not used)
North-Eastern	3,000	400	None (some reduced)
South-Eastern	4,950	650	None
Eastern	3,649	2,214	None
Western	Not stated	2,098*	Not stated
Northern Ireland	60,000 ⅓ for research fellowships)	1,100 (+1 fellowship at registrar level)	None

NB Figures for one financial year given. Asterisk indicates 2 or 3 years' figures averaged.

(August 1973)

https://doi.org/10.1192/S0007125074299847 Published online by Cambridge University Press