has been found to play an important part in the care of long-stay patients, having a marked effect on morale and personal comfort.

South East Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board

Special Conference on the Mentally Handicapped

A special two-day conference for staff working in the South East Metropolitan Region's mental handicap hospitals will be held in June. Its purpose will be to give an overall picture of the progress which has been made in the care of the mentally handicapped, and to highlight some of the most urgent priorities and problems facing the Region.

The conference will review the progress made in the development of smaller units for the mentally handicapped throughout the Region, the attempts to reduce overcrowding in the larger hospitals, the new patterns of multi-professional care, and the development of staff education and training. It will provide an opportunity for doctors, nurses, administrators, therapists, social workers and others engaged in the mental handicap sector to exchange knowledge and experience of recent advances in the field.

Views on Regional and local policies affecting mental handicap services will be discussed, and the conference is expected to focus on such subjects as patients' earnings, occupational and industrial therapy, the design of units for the handicapped, and liaison with local service organizations. It is planned to stage an exhibition of equipment and materials from various mental handicap hospitals to reflect some of the major changes which are taking place in the quality of life for patients, and examples of the modern, fashionable clothing now available in long-stay hospitals.

UNIVERSITIES AND TEACHING HOSPITALS

St. Thomas' Hospital, London

The Department of Psychological Medicine at St. Thomas' expects to take responsibility later this year for an adult psychiatric and psycho-geriatric service in a district of north Lambeth at present served by West Park Hospital.

Additional facilities at the South Western Hospital, two miles from the Embankment site, will include 50 beds for adults, a psycho-geriatric unit of 20 beds, and a psycho-geriatric day hospital for 30 places. A psychiatric day centre is established within the precinct, being administered by Lambeth Borough Council. The present in-patient unit at the Royal Waterloo Hospital, which was established by Dr. Sargant 25 years ago, is due to move to the new St. Thomas' Albert Embankment building in 1974–5. It will be situated in the first floor of the Tower Block, with 26 beds designed specifically for the treatment of psychiatric patients. The out-patient treatment centre 'Scutari' is adjacent and on the same floor as the main general out-patient clinics, with all the consequent advantages. The extra accommodation will allow the hospital to promote active community policies while continuing its traditional role.

Although removed from the main complex in its initial stages, the South Western Hospital site has numerous advantages. It is well placed in the district both for access of patients and relatives, and for the staff to patients in their homes. Other assets are the presence on this site of the Geriatric Department with 180 beds, the general medical beds and a ward for the treatment of chronic respiratory failure, attached administratively to the central intensive therapy unit. Not only will the psychiatric patients be treated in an essentially heterogeneous medical milieu, but general medical opinion will be available, especially for the elderly. Patients requiring special investigation will be admitted to the Embankment Unit. It is anticipated that for this stage, and for the subsequent development of the District Service, St. Thomas' will be linked with Tooting Bec Hospital.

The general aim of the service will be to attempt to give early active treatment to out-patients of all ages with a view to avoiding admission to hospital and subsequent life disruption. In preparation for this policy, the out-patient services have recently been re-organized to include specialized clinics, additional to the large out-patient ECT and follow-up services; these include clinics for patients receiving antidepressant drugs, lithium carbonate, behaviour therapy, hypnosis, group and individual psychotherapy. A weekly post-graduate session is devoted to the detailed discussion of patients whose illnesses have failed to respond to modern methods of treatment.

Important aspects of this new development are the teaching and research opportunities which will form the topic of a later report.

University of Dundee

In Dundee there are six main areas of research interest within each of which several staff are actively engaged. These are:

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The biochemistry of manic depressive psychosis;
Some organic and functional correlates of mental subnormality;
Aspects of psychotrophic drug metabolism and use;
Aspects of Personal Construct Theory;
Some psychophysiological correlates of psychosis; and
The correlation between psychiatric symptoms and personality traits.

MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AND RESEARCH FUND

At the last two meetings of the Research Committee in November 1972 and January 1973, the following Fellowships and Grants were awarded:

Dr. Gillian M. Cohen, Dept. of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford: a 3 year Fellowship to study Hemispheric Differences in Selective Attention.

Dr. Charles Pilcher, Dept. of Psychology, University of Birmingham: a 3 year Fellowship to investigate the Biochemical Determinants of Drug Addiction: Biochemical aspects of brain plasticity in relation to the cerebral mechanisms of drug addiction.

Dr. Colin Stolkin, MRC Neuro-immunology Project, Department of Zoology, University College London: a 3 year Fellowship to study Cell surface antigenic markers in the nervous system.

Dr. Elemer Szabadi, Department of Psychiatry, University of Edinburgh: a 3 year Fellowship to study the action of anti-depressant drugs on synaptic transmission in the caudate nucleus.

Dr. R. Morgan, Director of Rehabilitation, St. Wulstan's Hospital, Worcestershire: a 1 year grant for Scientific Assistance to study prognosis, rehabilitation and resettlement of long-stay psychiatric patients.

Dr. Elizabeth Newson, Child Development Research Unit, University of Nottingham: a 2 year grant for expenses to study Parents as Behaviour Modifiers.

Professor D. W. Straughan, The School of Pharmacy, London: a 2 year grant for Scientific Assistance to investigate Brain Monoamines, Amino Acids and Psychoactive Drugs.

Professor D. M. Vowles, University of Edinburgh: a 1 year grant for Scientific Assistance to further investigate patterns of hostility in children.

During the financial year April 1972 to March 1973, the MHRF have awarded a total of 11 new grants, 4 new Fellowships and 7 extensions to existing grants and Fellowships.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Group for the Psychiatry of Old Age

See under Royal College of Psychiatrists.

The Third International Congress of the Association will be held at The Hague from 4–12 September 1973. Interested persons should apply to: The Congressbureau, Inter Scientias N.V., Churchillplein 10, The Hague, The Netherlands.

The International Association for the Scientific Study of Mental Deficiency

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