RESEARCH COMMITTEE

A Course on Research Methodology and Statistics

by MAX HAMILTON

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A Course on Research Methodology and Statistics sponsored jointly by the Research Committee and the Department of Postgraduate Education, University of Leeds, was held in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Leeds, on 18/19 September and 9/10 October 1976.

Assimilating the research approach and statistical methods is difficult during a short course. It is a great mistake to cram too much into too little time. We attempted to solve the problem by giving students three weeks in which to do specified reading. They then attended the course over a weekend and took part in tutorials on their reading, lectures and some practical work. There was then an interval of three weeks in which the students had to read further prescribed material and prepare a research protocol. During the second weekend, students presented their protocols to the tutorial groups and there were two further lectures and some more practicals.

Twenty-one students took part: 16 psychiatrists, two surgeons, one general practitioner, one social worker and one occupational therapist. They came from all over the country; from Perth in Scotland to Taunton in Somerset. Only three were from Leeds, probably because here junior psychiatrists and social workers are taught clinical research methods and statistics during their postgraduate training.

Students were divided into three groups: one comprising those who knew nothing about statistics another of those who had some knowledge, and the third of those who knew the fundamentals but wished to improve their knowledge. Students came together only for lectures and practical work, and were divided for the tutorials.

On the last day students were asked to appraise the course in speech and in writing. The course design was given their enthusiastic approval. Some suggested that a third weekend would have been desirable in which students could have the opportunity to discuss their own research. The time provided for reading was said to be adequate and the recommended reading clear and good, but not easy. Students had been asked to look at an elementary text on statistics and read *Lectures on Methodology of Clinical Research* by Max Hamilton.

Tutorials met with no adverse criticism except that they were too short. Practicals were praised but again felt to be insufficiently long. Some of the students would undoubtedly have liked more personal attention. Comments on the lectures were mixed: 'too difficult', 'above my head', 'not enough opportunities for discussion'. In contrast, other students enthusiastically approved and requested more. The consensus was that it was a useful and informative course, and the final dinner helped to make it a social success too.

THE COLLEGE'S MEDALS AND PRIZES

Attention is specially drawn to the Medals and Prizes which are offered annually by the College. The conditions of award are to be found in the last edition of the Year Book (1969) or can be obtained from the Secretary.

Gaskell Medal and Prize

The examination for this prize is held in May of each year. In addition to a Medal the award attached to the prize is £75. The prize has always been considered one of the foremost academic distinctions obtainable in clinical psychiatry, and Members of the College are asked to bring it to the notice of suitable candidates who may be eligible to compete.

Entries must reach the Dean not later than 31 March in each year.

Bronze Medal and Prize

This prize is awarded annually for the best Dissertation submitted under conditions printed in the Year Book or obtainable from the Secretary. Candidates are reminded that Dissertations must reach the Dean before 30 April in each year, and must not exceed 10,000 words in length.

Divisional Prizes

Papers certified as eligible for this competition must be forwarded to reach the Dean not later than 20 April in each year.

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