THE LIBRARY'S FUNCTION IN PSYCHIATRIC EDUCATION*

A Survey of Trainees' Views

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The Royal College of Psychiatrists is at present concerned with establishing criteria whereby psychiatric hospitals and posts are to be accredited for training purposes. With regard to the role of the library, it is stated that 'there should be a medical library adequately housed and suitably fitted. The library should contain sufficient books and subscribe to an adequate number of journals to meet the needs of the trainees. For psychiatric units in general hospitals and for those psychiatric hospitals where a library at a postgraduate centre is within very easy access, the psychiatric sections of the library should contain sufficient books to meet the trainees' needs'. It is by no means clear, however, what constitutes 'sufficient' books and journals, nor what sort of library is 'adequate' for the needs of psychiatrists in training.

This paper examines the role of the library in postgraduate psychiatric education and is based on the results of a questionnaire† sent to the 404 members of the Association of Psychiatrists in Training (APIT) during the summer of 1973.

Outline of the Questionnaire

Three main areas were covered by the questionnaire. Firstly, it considered the future role of the library of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. In a memorandum on its present state the Hon. Librarian, Dr. Denis Leigh (1973), pointed out that as yet the library had no budget or staff. It contained about one hundred journals and a sizeable collection of historical books and manuscripts. For the College library to become a large loan library would involve considerable expenditure. Leigh questioned the value of such a policy in view of the existence of alternative large libraries such as those at the Institute of Psychiatry and the Royal Society of Medicine. The questionnaire sought the views of trainees on whether the future College library should act as a loan library, an historical collection or as a provider of photocopying and bibliographic services, i.e. assist trainees with present problems which their local libraries would be unable to manage.

Secondly, the questionnaire considered the performance of local libraries and whether they were adequate to the demands of trainees. Trainees were encouraged to comment on difficulties which they encountered with their local library services.

Thirdly, the trainees were asked which journals they personally received and how much money they spent on books per annum. They were invited to select from a list the ten most essential journals which in their view local libraries should stock. The trainees' choice of journals was compared with a previous list compiled by Miss Marshall (1970), and with those journals which figured most prominently in the reference list provided by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (Barraclough and Heine, 1972).

Results

1. *Function of the Royal College library*

(a) Total number of replies: 90
30 Senior Registrars; 7 Honorary Senior Registrars; 36 Registrars; 7 S.H.O's; 6 Medical Assistants; 4 Clinical Assistants.

(b) Preference expressed
1. College library should be a loan library:
1st choice, 16; 2nd choice, 44; 3rd choice, 25; no view expressed, 5.
2. College library should provide photocopying and bibliography service:
1st choice, 57; 2nd choice, 25; 3rd choice, 5; no view expressed, 3.
3. College library should be primarily an historical library:
1st choice, 17; 2nd choice, 18; 3rd choice, 49; no view expressed, 6.

(c) Experience in psychiatry of sample:
In psychiatry less than one year, 2. In psychiatry between 1 and 3 years, 32. In psychiatry longer than 3 years, 56.

(d) Correlation between experience and choice of library function
A slightly larger number of those in psychiatry longer than three years were in favour of the College library acting as a loan library.

2. *Performance of trainee's own library*

(a) Total number of replies: 89
Does trainee's hospital have a library?:
Yes, 87. No, 2.

* The views expressed in this and other signed articles are those of the individual or body concerned, and do not necessarily represent those of the College.

† Available on request from the authors.

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(Of the two without—one was a registrar working at a psychiatric hospital classified as private; she had been told beforehand that there would not be such facilities. She therefore had no criticisms. The other was a registrar at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh—he claimed that the library there 'hardly exists' but good library facilities are nearby.)

Satisfied with textbook selection?:
Yes, 65. No, 23—6 of whom indicated presence of a good psychiatric library in nearby vicinity.

Satisfied with journals available?:
Yes, 60. No, 27—6 of whom indicated presence of better facilities nearby.

Able to obtain through library books or references which they do not stock?:
No difficulty, 21. Difficulty, 66.
Of those having such difficulty, 6 trainees were at Bethlem Royal and Maudsley and 7 trainees were at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital.

3. *Journal preference of psychiatric trainees*

(a) *Journals received by trainees:*

54 received the *British Medical Journal*. 10 received the *Lancet*. 61 received the *British Journal of Psychiatry*. 18 received *Psychological Medicine*.
Only 14 trainees received none of the above four journals. 24 trainees received one of the above journals. 31 trainees received two of the above journals. 13 trainees received three of the above journals. 5 trainees received all of the above journals.
A total of 50 different additional journals were received by trainees.

(b) *Money spent per annum on psychiatric books*

1. Less than £5	11
2. £5–10	29
3. £10–£20	31
4. Over £20	17
Total replies	88

i.e. Over two-thirds spent between £5 and £20 on books each year.

(c) *Journals which should be stocked by local library (each trainee invited to choose 10 journals):*

Journals	No. of trainees nominating it in their 10
British Journal of Psychiatry	77
American Journal of Psychiatry	71
British Medical Journal	57
Lancet	52
Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry	51
Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica	50
Archives of General Psychiatry	46
British Journal of Hospital Medicine	46
Psychological Medicine	46
British Journal of Medical Psychology	30
Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry	25
International Journal of Psychoanalysis	22
Journal of Psychosomatic Research	20
Journal of Mental Subnormality	18
Psychosomatic Medicine	17
International Journal of Psychiatry	16
Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases	15
Behaviour Research and Therapy	15
American Journal of Psychotherapy	11
Journal of Behaviour Therapy etc.	10

None of the remaining journals of the 44 offered obtained more than 9 nominations. Fourteen additional journals were named by trainees, of which only the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* (7), *Comprehensive Psychiatry* (4), and the *British Journal of Social and Preventive Medicine* (3) received more than one nomination.

Addenda

1. *The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Reading list in Psychiatry (2nd Edition)*
Editors: Barraclough, B. M. and Heine, B. (July 1972)

The reading list consisted of 581 references. These were taken from 101 different journals. Ninety-six articles came from books, annual reviews, recent advances etc.
Twelve journals contained 10 or more references:

1. *British Journal of Psychiatry* and former *Journal of Mental Science*	109
2. *British Medical Journal*	54
3. *Lancet*	32
4. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*	24
5. *American Journal of Psychiatry*	24

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6. *Proceeaings of the Royal Society of Medicine* ..	19
7. *British Journal of Hospital Medicine* ..	19
8. *Archives of General Psychiatry*	14
9. *Journal of Mental Deficiency Research* ..	14
10. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* ..	10
11. *British Journal of Medical Psychology* ..	10
12. *British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine*	10

Ten journals contained 4–8 references:

1. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* ..	8
2. *International Journal of Psycho-analysis* ..	7
3. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*	6
4. *Psychological Medicine*	6
5. *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* ..	5
6. *Post-Graduate Medicine*	5
7. *Psychiatric Quarterly*	5
8. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* ..	4
9. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*	4
10. *Psychological Bulletin*	4

There were 78 other journals used in the list each containing 1–3 references.

N.B. The editors compiled the lists after seeking specialist advice on the various subsections of psychiatry. Special emphasis was placed on the section on Mental Subnormality, and its number of references was deliberately large compared with the rest of the list, as this has been a rather neglected subject.

2. *Miss H. Marshall's reading list (1970)*
   1. *British Journal of Psychiatry*
   2. *American Journal of Psychiatry*
   3. *Archives of General Psychiatry*
   4. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*
   5. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*
   6. *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry*
   7. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*
   8. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*
   9. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*
   10. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*
   11. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*
   12. *Lancet*
   13. *British Medical Journal*
   14. *British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine*
   15. *Nature*
   16. *Index Medicus (Abbreviated)*
   17. *Excerpta Medica, Section of Psychiatry*

One could add to this list others, such as *Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology, Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Journal of Clinical Psychology, British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, Journal of Mental Deficiency Research, Behaviour Research and Therapy, British Journal of Criminology*, etc. The first 8 of the list, plus the *B.M.J.* and *Lancet*, were estimated to cost £100, and the whole of the first part, plus a section of the second, £200.

N.B. Individual comments by trainees on present library facilities are incorporated in the discussion.

Discussion

Firstly, it must be recognized that the population sample was a highly selected one. Of APIT's 404 members, approximately 360 (90 per cent) were home-trained and the majority of those who replied were either senior registrars or registrars who had been in psychiatric training for at least three years. This is in sharp contrast with the national manpower situation. The statistics for England and Wales (1970) show that out of a total of 844 junior psychiatrists, only 375 (44 per cent) were home-trained, and the majority of these were registrars or S.H.O's (Brook, 1970). A second important shortcoming of the inquiry was the low response rate, only 90 (22.5 per cent) out of the sample of 404 replying.

It is therefore probable that the results underestimate the problems experienced by trainees, as few of the replies came from inexperienced overseas graduates in peripheral hospitals, i.e. those trainees who would appear from the statistical analysis of the results of the M.R.C.Psych. examination to be most in need of assistance (Hassall and Trethowan, 1974). On the positive side, however, the replies came in the main from the more experienced and favoured trainees who have given most thought to the current state of postgraduate psychiatric education.

The function of the College library

There was a clearly stated preference for the College library to provide a photocopying and bibliographic service. It was suggested by several trainees that key psychiatric references and translated portions of classic texts might be reprinted and distributed to trainees at a nominal charge, the procedure being subsidized if necessary by pharmaceutical companies. In fact, the limited reprint collection that has been produced (ed. Barraclough and Heine, 1971) was reported as being most useful (O'Farrell, 1973).

It was also suggested that the College might keep a register of members currently engaged in specific research areas, so that a trainee could be directed to the most appropriate person for guidance and advice

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concerning a proposed piece of research; and that a translation service with a central register of doctors able to translate foreign language papers at a reasonable cost might be provided. With regard to historical references, it was felt that for the sake of convenience these should all be stored in one medical library.

The function of the peripheral hospital library

The Royal Medico-Psychological Association's survey and follow-up report on the state of psychiatric education reported an improvement in the provision of library facilities over the period 1965–69. By the latter date only 9 per cent of hospitals did not have 'an independent medical library with adequate furnishings and fittings' (R.M.P.A., 1968, 1969). The improvement was related to increased expenditure, a speculation supported in a later study (Brook, 1973). In our survey, virtually all trainees had access to a local library, but over 25 per cent express dissatisfaction with the available selection of textbooks and journals, and 60 per cent experienced difficulties in obtaining references or books not in stock.

A number of suggestions for improving peripheral libraries were made. There was a demand for part-time library-secretaries, a point stressed by Miss Marshall (1970). A centralized advisory service in each local area to facilitate the obtaining of references not stocked by the local library was a popular request. Photocopying equipment, which could be acquired for a relatively modest sum, could prove invaluable for a library which could not afford a large number of journals. Thus a photocopied collection of key articles could be accumulated for reference purposes.

In those areas where local hospital libraries were deemed inadequate, a university library was often close at hand. However, such libraries were often reported as having a somewhat limited selection of psychiatric material; this confirmed the findings of Brook and Letemendia (1970), who concluded 'it is legitimate to ask if a teaching hospital is discharging its obligations to psychiatric education when it regards £50 a year for buying books and journals as adequate'. One trainee reported being barred entry to the local university library and forbidden even to use it for reference purposes.

Other comments referred to the need for libraries to keep a stock of immediately available reference copies of the more popular journals and the difficulties encountered in obtaining literature on para-psychiatric topics such as sociology, social anthropology, ethology and psycho-linguistics.

Books and journals

The majority of respondents personally subscribed to the *British Journal of Psychiatry* (61) and the *B.M.J.* (54). A smaller number received the *Lancet* (10) and *Psychological Medicine* (18). Over two-thirds of the trainees spent £5–20 per year on books.

Library book requirements

It is difficult to establish what constitutes a satisfactory selection of books, and no attempt was made in this questionnaire to formulate one. Shepherd (1969) suggested a personal book-list, and Brook (1973) quoted a list of over 90 books. He found that when more than 40 of these were present in a given library the trainees had no complaints, whereas a quarter of trainees were dissatisfied when a library stocked less.

Journal requirements

In her detailed examination of the running costs of a psychiatric hospital library Miss Marshall concluded that the first essential was to establish the basic journal requirements and work from this. She devised a list of the most useful journals, and reckoned that the first eight journals on her list, together with the *B.M.J.* and the *Lancet*, would cost £100 per year. Adding a further ten journals from the remainder on the list brought the annual cost up to £200. Certain abstracting and indexing journals, such as the abridged *Index Medicus* and the *Excerpta Medica Psychiatry Section* should in her opinion also be included. Extra finances would of course be required for borrowing from other libraries, subscriptions, photocopying, paying for annual reviews and for staffing etc. It is of note that of the mental hospitals listed in the directory of medical libraries 16 took 11–50 journals each, with an average of 20 (Marshall, 1970). A subsequent study revealed that more than a quarter of trainees were dissatisfied with a library's provisions when it subscribed to only four of the first six or to fewer than six of the first twelve of the journals ranked by Miss Marshall (Brook, 1973).

In our questionnaire, trainees were invited to name their top 10 journals in order of preference from a suggested list containing 44 journals. They were allowed to include any other relevant journal not listed if they wished. (It is possible that the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, *Comprehensive Psychiatry* and the *British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine* might have ranked higher had they been on the original list of journals).

There was a wide measure of agreement between the trainees' choices. Miss Marshall's list and the list compiled from the most popular journals contained in the College's reading list. The trainees' list resembled more closely that derived from the College reading list, which may possibly reflect their pre-

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occupation with the requirements for the Membership examination. These findings, taken together, suggest that it should now be possible for the College to decide on a list of basic journals which should be stocked by accredited peripheral libraries, and 20 journals would appear to be a reasonable minimum figure.

Suggestions for the future library

Using the results of this questionnaire and the discussion as a basis, it is possible to describe what might constitute adequate library facilities for psychiatric trainees. Firstly, the College library, in addition to providing a photocopying and bibliographic service, should help in other ways, such as providing guidance with the development of research projects and providing a translation service.

Psychiatric hospital libraries should be required to stock a minimum of 20 journals, drawn from the lists which are described in this paper. The minimum number and type of books required are more difficult to lay down in detail. In general, teaching hospitals need to enlarge the psychiatric sections of their libraries. The problem of access to university libraries also requires examination. The introduction of centralized library facilities serving a large area, the presence of part-time librarians and the purchase of photocopying machines would all serve to improve the efficiency of local libraries.

Summary and conclusions

This paper is concerned with what constitutes an adequate psychiatric library for the trainees' needs. It is based on the results of a questionnaire sent to the members of the Association of Psychiatrists in Training which dealt with the future of the College library, the standards of local hospital libraries, and the requirements of psychiatric trainees.

The trainees in the study believed that the College should primarily provide a photocopying and bibliographic advisory service rather than function as a lending library. Some teaching hospitals were reported as having inadequate psychiatric sections, and problems of access were encountered with regard to some nearby university libraries. Suggestions were made with regard to improving peripheral library facilities, and included the provision of a local centralized coordinating service, an increase in the number of part-time librarians and a greater use of photocopying machines. Finally, based on this and previous surveys, it is suggested that a basic list of 20 psychiatric journals should be compiled to serve as a minimum training requirement for all psychiatric hospitals containing junior psychiatric staff.

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Requests for reprints should be addressed to Dr. Lucas, Maudsley Hospital, London, S.E.5.

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