

patient cannot be promoted he or she must be so informed.

8. Whatever the psychiatrist has been told by the patient, or has noted during examination or treatment, must be kept confidential unless the patient releases the psychiatrist from professional secrecy, or else vital common values or the patient's best interest makes disclosure imperative. In these cases, however, the patient must be immediately informed of the breach of secrecy.

9. To increase and propagate psychiatric knowledge and skill requires participation of the patients. Informed consent must, however, be obtained before presenting a patient to a class and, if possible, also when a case history is published, and all reasonable measures be taken to preserve the anonymity and to safeguard the personal reputation of the subject.

In clinical research, as in therapy, every subject must be offered the best available treatment. His or

her participation must be voluntary, after full information has been given of the aims, procedures, risks and inconveniences of the project, and there must always be a reasonable relationship between calculated risks or inconveniences and the benefit of the study.

For children and other patients who cannot themselves give informed consent this should be obtained from someone close to them.

10. Every patient or research subject is free to withdraw for any reason at any time from any voluntary treatment and from any teaching or research programme in which he or she participates. This withdrawal, as well as any refusal to enter a programme, must never influence the psychiatrist's efforts to help the patient or subject.

The psychiatrist should stop all therapeutic, teaching or research programmes that may evolve contrary to the principles of this Declaration.

CORRESPONDENCE

DEPENDENCE/ADDICTION GROUP

DEAR SIR,

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has four Specialist Sections (Mental Deficiency, Child Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Forensic Psychiatry) and there are two special Groups dealing with Social Psychiatry and the Psychiatry of Old Age (Council has recommended that the latter should now become a Section). There is no Group to deal with the problems of dependence on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. There have been informal discussions among members of the College who work with or are interested in these problems, and preliminary consideration has been given to setting-up such a Group. It is proposed to hold a meeting at the College at 4.30 pm on Wednesday, 25 January 1978, to discuss this suggestion further.

It would be helpful if College members could let me have any comments they may have about this proposed Group and let me know if they would be interested in, and able to come to, this meeting. It would also be helpful to know who might wish to join such a Group if it were set up, and I would be glad to have the names of anyone interested, even if unable to attend the meeting.

If at this meeting it is decided that it would be reasonable to start a Group, the procedure would be to send a formal proposal to Council. It would also be desirable to elect provisionally a Chairman and Secretary.

THOMAS BEWLEY

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IS IT CRICKET?

DEAR SIR,

The Scribe's Column (*Bulletin*, November 1977) on the 'Hospital Cricket Advisory Service' made enjoyable reading. We had the chance to applaud some splendid bowling, the dismissal of several inept batsmen, and a couple of easy catches.

This skilful parody illustrates the folly of replacing, in our hospital service, long traditions of experience and professional skill with half-baked dogma. Psychiatry, in addition, is suffering from the heavy roller of bureaucracy on the one hand, and on the other an aggressive watering of the pitch by the many disgruntled members who have not been selected for the first eleven. But what is so different in the

world at large? Psychiatric hospitals cannot opt out of the social changes which are evident not only in the running of the Health Service but also in national and local government, industry, education, and even the M.C.C.!

Whether we like it or not, the old days of leaders-and-led, of Gentlemen-and-Players, are over. We are in the age of participative democracy, and certainly we are not doing very well. We can either retreat into anarchy or totalitarianism, or strive to make the democratic system work. Skilful leadership has never been more necessary; and the jargon about communication, shared responsibility, and appropriate levels of decision-making—at which it is easy to poke fun—contains important truths. You see,

Scribe, I believe in the multidisciplinary team as I believe in marriage and the family. There are unfortunate marriages and problem families—as there are poorly run cricket-teams—but they do not invalidate the notion or the method.

I think we must continue to work hopefully and insightfully towards the construction of social systems (which include not only new ideas of teamwork but also older values of proven worth) to better inform our modern institutions and help them to be relevant and effective.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Brent Consultation Centre and Centre for Research into Adolescent Breakdown

The Seventh Conference on Adolescence will be held on Saturday, 4 March and will focus on the psychological aspects of sexuality in adolescent development and breakdown, and on the special responsibility of the professional worker in his contact with vulnerable young people. The registration fee is £5, which includes lunch. Application form and further details from Brent Consultation Centre, Johnston House, 51 Winchester Avenue, London NW6. *Registration will close on 31 January.*

Canadian Society for Autistic Children

The second Annual Conference of the Canadian Society for Autistic Children, sponsored by the Pacific Association for Autistic Children, will be held in Vancouver from 24–26 May 1978, with the general theme, 'Autism: Research, theory and practice'. Those requiring further information or wishing to participate in the Conference should contact Lois Meyerhoff, Conference Coordinator, Pacific Association for Autistic Children, 4125 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

International Society for Electrosleep and Electroanaesthesia

The Fifth International Symposium on Electro-

therapeutic Sleep and Electroanaesthesia (also covering Electroacupuncture and Electrohypnosis) will be held in Graz, Austria, from 11–16 September 1978. Original contributions on any of these topics are invited, and authors should contact the Secretariat at Universitätsklinik für Chirurgie, 8036 Graz, Austria, for further information.

Second International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect

The Second International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect will be held in London from 12–15 September 1978. The subject of the Congress is 'The Abused Child in the Family and in the Community' and the themes for each day: 'The rights of the abused child, his development and his needs for treatment, and for parenting'; 'Family problems and interactions within the family, however constituted, including the rights of the siblings and the parents'; 'The community's responsibility towards the abused child and towards his family'. Papers for presentation are invited and forms of application *which must be returned, together with an abstract of not more than 500 words, by 20 January*, are obtainable from Second International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect, The Congress Office, Conference Services Limited, 43 Charles Street, Mayfair, London W1X 7PB. The provisional programme will be available from the above address in February.