

was a majority of the working party. No specific remit was given by the Executive Committee and the Working Party was about to gather general views from interested parties, in particular from nurse therapists and from training courses. Apart from these mailed requests (which have not, I think, as yet gone out) an open invitation appeared in this Bulletin. That nurse therapists were excluded from the request was a clerical error—a weak excuse but believable to anyone reading to the bottom of the announcement since inclusion is then implied.

Thus, this was not a sinister exercise. It happened to arise at a time when nurse therapists were feeling justifiably angry; and certainly more information should have been supplied. I hope that our membership will now see this as a worthwhile enquiry and that everyone will be prepared to give their views.

ANTONIA WHITEHEAD

Dear Sir,

re: Treating Drug Takers

In the introduction to his paper “Treating Drug Takers” (Behavioural Psychotherapy 6/1 January, 1978), Roger Paxton quotes me as saying that “People who take heroin, morphine and other drugs of this type are . . . feckless and irresponsible and even chronic and untreatable” (Bewley, 1973).

I wrote nothing of the sort and would like to reproduce in full the two sentences which have been misquoted, since I would not wish readers of “Behavioural Psychotherapy” to assume I am either foolish, opinionated or a therapeutic nihilist. I wrote:

- (1) “Since the feckless and irresponsible are more likely to use drugs and develop complications from the use, doctors should be aware of their responsibilities, and the responsibility for dealing with tiresome . . . patients should not be avoided.”
- (2) “Since much illness is chronic and untreatable, alleviation and continuing support may be more important than curative programmes.”

Neither of these states that opiate users as a class are “feckless and irresponsible” and “chronic and untreatable”. The first sentence implies that *some* of them *may* be feckless and irresponsible, not that *all* of them *are*. The second sentence does not refer to opiate users at all, but to a general principle of medical practice which is relevant for opiate users as well as other people.

Might I suggest an old-fashioned behavioural remedy for this author. He should be given 100 lines to write out:-

“When I quote from papers, I should do so correctly”.

Yours sincerely,
THOMAS BEWLEY,
Consultant Psychiatrist