

Psychiatric Services for the Mentally Handicapped

The College is becoming concerned about the increasing number of reports of health districts proposing to run services for the mentally handicapped either (a) without employing a consultant psychiatrist in mental handicap or (b) severely reducing the number of consultant sessions in the Psychiatry of Mental Handicap or (c) seeking to provide services by creating joint posts with sole responsibility for more than one psychiatric specialty.

The attention of Regional Advisers and medical representatives on UMTs and Planning Teams is drawn to the College memoranda on Services for Psychiatrically Disturbed Mentally Handicapped Adults and Young People¹ and Consultant Appointments in the Psychiatry of Mental Handicap.² The College is firmly of the view that because of the unique features attending the diagnosis, presentation and treatment of psychiatric and behaviour problems in the mentally handicapped a specialised psychiatric service is required, staffed by psychiatrists, nurses and others with a special training in all aspects of mental handicap. Consultant psychiatrists responsible for organising this service should be whole-time, or, if in a joint post, should have the majority of sessions in mental handicap. Joint posts with

the main organisational responsibility for two psychiatric specialties, e.g. Mental Handicap and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, are not acceptable. The current agreed norm for consultant posts in the Psychiatry of Mental Handicap is one WTE per 200,000 general population.

Regional Advisers and Clinical Tutors are reminded that experience in an established service for the mentally handicapped should be available for trainees in psychiatric training schemes.

Regional Advisers and other concerned psychiatrists are advised to consult the Registrar or the Chairman of the Section for the Psychiatry of Mental Handicap where proposals for posts and services do not match College requirements.

REFERENCES

- ¹ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS (1986) Psychiatric services for mentally handicapped adults and young people. *Bulletin of the Royal College of Psychiatrists*, 10, 321–322.
- ²ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS (1985) Guidelines for regional advisers on consultant psychiatrist posts in mental handicap. *Bulletin of the Royal College of Psychiatrists*, 9, 207–208.

Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

JOHN ROGER HAWKINGS, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, North Tees and Winterton Hospitals, Cleveland.

Dr J. R. Hawkins died suddenly on 9 October 1987 in Sedgfield, County Durham. He was 65.

John Roger Hawkins was born in Taunton and educated at Colston's School and the University of Bristol, where he graduated MB, ChB in 1945. During the next two years he trained in psychiatry. He entered the army in 1948 on a short service commission, becoming senior specialist in psychiatry to the British army of the Rhine with the rank of major. From 1952 he was senior registrar in the United Birmingham hospitals until his appointment as consultant to Winterton and North Tees Hospitals in 1955. He later was also consultant to Richmond Hill School, Stockton child guidance clinic, and Middleton Hall Private Mental Hospital. He retired from the NHS in 1986, continuing private practice from his home. He was chairman of the Stockton branch of the BMA in 1976.

John was always an irregular time-keeper, not least because once he was interviewing a patient time did not matter and the rest could wait. Thus, although he was an irritant to administrators, patients worshipped him, especially those whom he befriended and helped long after they had lost other

medical sympathy. General practitioners valued his services highly, particularly appreciating his comprehensive assessment of the patient, conveyed as a brilliant essay. He had an extensive medico-legal practice. As an expert he excelled, his clarity of exposition and obvious command of his subject making him a formidable witness, particularly for the defence in several murder trials.

John's love and understanding of people as individuals was ever apparent, but, as he confessed, his deep insight into the lot of humanity appalled and depressed him, so that he threw himself into all aspects of his life with extra enthusiasm. Artist, talented sculptor, sailor, he even found time for long discussions in philosophy and religion with his many friends of the cathedral and university in Durham. A gourmet's tastes and a prodigious appetite sustained his physical presence; his enjoyment was infectious, so that it was a delight to entertain him or to be his guest. He is survived by his wife, Joyce, and his two children, Judith and Julian.

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