

and monitoring of standards of care in all their hospitals, including mental illness and mental handicap hospitals. If they chose to do so they could be assisted by the Development Team for the Mentally Handicapped and by the Health Advisory Service whose reports the Government recently decided to publish in the future, save in exceptional cases.

Development Team for the Mentally Handicapped

On 25 July there were a number of questions about the work of the Development Team for the Mentally Handicapped. The Minister of Health said that decisions about publication of Development Team reports are not taken by Ministers. The Team's reports are the property of the health and local authorities who seek its advice, and decisions about the availability of reports are entirely for them. No decisions had yet been taken about the leadership of the Team when Dr Gerald Simon retires as its Director. The Minister refused to act upon a suggestion that an inquiry should be instituted on the conditions for mentally handicapped people in each of the institutions that had been criticized in reports. The Minister said that up to June 1981 eighty-two reports to authorities had been made by the Team.

Consultants

On 26 July a number of questions were asked about consultant manpower. The Minister for Health confirmed that the Secretary of State had made it clear on 7 July that it will be necessary for health authorities to work to lower manpower targets for 1984, but the Government remained committed to the policy objective of improving the medical

staffing structure, and therefore the quality of medical care, by increasing the ratio of consultants to junior staff. In the four years from 1978 to 1982 the number of consultants had increased by 992, which is an increase of 8.1 per cent. Mr Jack Ashley asked the Minister to comment on the distribution of consultants, noting that in the West Midlands there was less than one consultant per million people whereas the Thames Region had seven consultants per million people. The Minister said that the unfair distribution of resources went back to the beginning of the NHS, but he agreed that the situation was unsatisfactory and the Government continued to redistribute resources, and therefore consultant staff, in their allocation of monies. As a result they continued to give the West Midlands Region growth money and had told it to continue planning in the expectation of increased resources in the next ten years. He denied a recent report that as a result of cuts in resource allocations it would be necessary to dismiss 20,000 NHS staff, including doctors and nurses. It was believed that a more efficient use of manpower could be achieved without any adverse effect on patient services.

Voluntary Organizations

The DHSS gave details of grants to voluntary bodies in 1982-83 when the Department gave grants totalling over £15 million to ten different schemes.

Summer Recess

Parliament adjourned for the Summer Recess on 29 July 1983.

ROBERT BLUGLASS

Psychiatry at the Careers Fair

DAVID GOLDBERG, Professor of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, University of Manchester

Earlier this year the Department of Psychiatry was invited to participate in a Careers Fair at the Medical School, organized by the Postgraduate Dean's Department rather than the BMA. This fair was aimed at medical students and junior doctors, and consisted of poster displays and stands by many different medical specialties. The students attended in huge numbers and in discussions afterwards their representatives commented that it was particularly helpful to realize that careers were available in specialties such as dermatology, venereology and some branches of chemical pathology.

The problem for major specialties such as medicine, surgery, general practice and psychiatry is rather different from the smaller branches of the subject. Perhaps because the students have direct knowledge of them, they already

have some idea about what the specialty offers, and there are generally no recruitment problems. Where psychiatry is concerned we already have more applicants than places on our training scheme, so we saw the problem in three main aspects. First, we wanted to improve the calibre of the potential recruits to the subject by showing the subject in such a way that the most able medical students would give us serious consideration. Second, we wished to improve recruitment to 'shortage specialties' within psychiatry, notably mental handicap and psychiatry of old age. Finally, we wanted to make available information about the actual process of training to be a psychiatrist, both from a factual and from an experiential standpoint. Our stand had four components: senior psychiatrists and psychiatrists in training available to talk to individual students; a free

booklet written by ourselves and published by the Post-graduate Dean's Department called *Careers in Psychiatry*; a non-stop silent slide presentation giving information about training; and a selection of three videotapes with sound were played almost continuously.

The psychiatrists

While the students seemed pleased to see that senior members of the department were available to talk to them, they seemed to find that the trainees on the stand were far more easy to approach than senior teachers. We found that our trainee would be surrounded by an eager group of students asking questions, but senior teachers often had to open conversations with students who had paused at the stand to watch a videotape or the slide presentation.

The *Careers in Psychiatry* booklet

Many students were undecided about careers, and dealt with their indecision by magpie behaviour: pausing at our stand only long enough to add our booklet to the large pile already collected from other stands. However, other students consulted the booklet while they were at the stand, and asked detailed questions of members of staff. For the students with a more serious interest, the booklet had the useful function of giving them detailed factual information to take home. Our staff also had small supplies of the booklets describing the MRCPsych Course and the MSc (Psychiatry) Course, and gave these to students who clearly had a serious interest in the subject.

The slide presentation

This was a great success, it was eye-catching and caused the students to stop at our stall and watch a few slides. It consisted of a non-stop presentation of 27 slides (three identical sets in a standard 80-frame carousel) which used a 'question and answer' format to deal with questions that are often in students' minds. It covered identical ground to the '*Careers in Psychiatry*' booklet—so that questions to staff on the stand usually led to the student being offered a booklet.

The videotapes

There were three, and our single poster described them to students and invited them to ask for one to be played.

(a) *Psychiatrists on Psychiatry*

Seven psychiatrists who were well-known to the students, and three of our current trainees were interviewed seriatim by myself. Each interview lasted two to three minutes, and was preceded by a caption. The interviewee was asked about the nature of their clinical work, and all were asked what

they enjoyed about being a psychiatrist. This tape was very successful in attracting a crowd of students, and we tended to play it whenever there was no specific request for either of the other two. One of our trainers spoke of psychiatry as a career for a woman doctor, and we noticed that female students would come and wait patiently for her interview to come round: we were evidently saying something that interested them.

(b) *Careers in Mental Handicap*

This tape was prepared in our Manchester studios by Professor Joan Bicknell, and used much previously recorded material generously made available by the BBC, Granada Television, and the Ravenswood Trust.

Professor Bicknell gave viewers an excellent idea of what a modern, community-orientated service for the mentally handicapped was like. We had requests for this programme on several occasions during the day, and several members of staff from other stands were curious about it.

(c) *Careers in Psychiatry of Old Age*

This videotape was prepared by Dr David Jolley and Dr Susan Hodgson in our departmental studios, and included videotape showing the service in action as well as interviews and graphics describing the career opportunities in the specialty. It was also requested on several occasions during the day, and the students seemed interested in what they saw.

Evaluation

It is not easy to evaluate the success of this effort by our staff, although immediate feedback from students was very favourable. We certainly had even better applicants this year for our training posts than ever before, but it is likely that this would have happened even without the Careers Fair, owing to the national situation concerning medical unemployment. If a student asks us for a training in a shortage specialty because of the videotapes, our effort will certainly have been justified. In the meantime our only numerical indicator of the success of the Fair is that used by the Post-graduate Dean's Department: number of cups of coffee consumed by the students. As a statistic this is clearly prone to several unusual sources of error, and it is in any case not an unduplicated count: but it stands at 920. We shall try and do better than that next time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Mr Terry O'Dowd for making the three videotapes, and Mr Richard Coaton of the Department of Medical Illustration at Withington for making the slide presentation. We thank all members of the staff who participated in the videotapes and appeared at the Fair.