

The MRCPsych examinations

In the June 1988 issue of the *Bulletin* (112), several articles relating to the examinations appeared under the section, *Trainees Forum*.

We would like to draw your attention to two inaccuracies:

1. Drs Armstrong and Loosmore's article 'How to run the MRCPsych Part II Examination' (p 229) refers to the clinical and oral section of the examination. It states that the examination includes a viva lasting 15 minutes.

This information is *incorrect*. The PMP Oral Section of the MRCPsych Part II lasts 30 minutes.

2. Dr O. Daly's article 'The Membership Examination—One Candidate's View Point' (p 231) makes a reference to a variable percentage contribution of marks from each section of the Examination.

In fact the four parts of the Membership Examination (MCQ, Essay, Clinical and Oral) have equal weight in terms of marks. Although candidates must pass the Clinical Examination, the other three parts should be seen as complementary rather than secondary to it.

Professor A. C. P. SIMS, *Dean*
Professor H. G. MORGAN, *Chief Examiner*

Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

VOJTECH ADALBERT KRAL, Professor Emeritus of Clinical Psychiatry, University of Western Ontario, Canada.

Dr Vojtech Adalbert Kral, a distinguished Canadian psychiatrist and pioneer of psychogeriatrics, known to his family and friends as Bertie, died on 6 June, 1988 during a visit to Israel.

Dr Kral was born on 5 February, 1903 in what is now Czechoslovakia and received his education in the German-speaking state high school (Gymnasium) in Prague and at the German University of Prague, graduating MD in March 1927. He studied further with the leaders of psychiatry and neurology in Vienna, Zurich, and Munich and, from 1935 to 1938, was a privat-dozent, corresponding to an Associate Professor, in the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry at his alma mater.

He and his wife, Katherine, (née Neumark), an ophthalmologist, as Jews, were both imprisoned in Theresienstadt Concentration Camp throughout the Nazi period. There, he participated in the medical care of the prisoners and he and his wife were saved from deportation to Auschwitz and extermination because of the Nazi need for an expert opinion on an outbreak of encephalitis amongst prisoners which might have affected the staff. He subsequently described this epidemic in 1947 in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, as well as in a Czech journal.

Following their liberation, the Krals returned to Czechoslovakia but, after the Communist takeover, they fled to Canada. From 1952 to 1972, he served first as lecturer and ultimately as Associate Professor at McGill University, having achieved specialist certification in both neurology and psychiatry in Canada. Thereafter, he moved to London, Ontario, and continued to work and teach psychogeriatrics.

Dr Kral published some 180 papers or chapters of books on scientific topics. His initial studies were on the biochemistry of the cerebrospinal fluid in different illnesses of the nervous system. From 1933 onwards, he studied memory function in such disorders. In 1956, he described benign senescent forgetfulness as a common phenomenon of the elderly, not to be confused with dementing illnesses like Alzheimer's disease. His recognition of this harmless syndrome was widely appreciated and helped to reassure many ageing individuals. He undertook further studies on Alzheimer's disease, neurotropic medication, and pseudo-dementia of the aged.

Dr Kral received the Allan Award and Gold Medal of the American Geriatric Society, as well as an honorary award from the Ontario Psychogeriatric Association and the annual award of the Psychiatric Out-patients Center of America. He was elected a Fellow of the British Royal College of Psychiatrists and a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Associ-

ation, in addition to being a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada. He continued to see patients, teach, and publish research findings and scholarly commentaries up till the time of his death.

Dr Kral was profoundly esteemed and respected for his penetrating intellect, and his unparalleled knowledge of neurology and psychiatry in the 20th century. He seemed to have known, or have been taught by, almost every neurologist or psychiatrist of distinction, both from continental Europe, and the English-speaking world. If they had not taught him, he had taught them. As a clinician, he was a highly skilled psychotherapist and developed a wide range of services for elderly patients. He was also a pioneer in the delivery of psychogeriatric care and in its scientific development, and the founder of psychogeriatrics in Canada. His courage, tenacity, and dignity were alike respected.

His wife, Dr Katherine Kral, survives him.

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THE LORD TAYLOR OF HARLOW, Plas-y-garth, Clyn Ceirog, Llangollen, Clywd, Wales

Lord Taylor, an honorary Fellow of the College, died on 1 February 1988, at the age of 77. He was described in *The Times* as 'psychiatrist and sociologist, with a parliamentary career in the House of Commons in the first post-war Labour government, and, later, in the House of Lords'. He was a distinguished politician, developer of a new town, doctor, medical writer, research worker, sociologist, educationalist and administrator.

Lord Taylor was perhaps the founder and certainly the most prominent person in dealing with mutual interests between general practice and psychiatry. He trained in psychiatry both at Bethlem Royal Hospital and at the Maudsley Hospital. His important work on psychiatric aspects in the community and in primary care included his book *The Suburban Neurosis* in 1938. He also wrote *Mental Illness as a Clue to Normality* and *The Psychopath in our Midst*.

After his important contribution as a parliamentarian and Parliamentary Private Secretary to the inauguration of the National Health Service, he was involved with the provision of health services in Harlow New Town and made far-reaching contributions to the epidemiology of psychiatric disorder in his book *Mental Health and the Environment* in 1964. This remains a classic and was seminal both to the link between mental illness and primary care, and

also in epidemiological studies in neurotic disorders. He was a good friend to psychiatry and advocated the highest standards of psychiatric practice by psychiatrists themselves and by general practitioners. His contributions to psychiatry were made from outside direct psychiatric practice. He was made an honorary Fellow of the College in 1986.

During his long and extremely varied career, after postgraduate specialist studies in industrial medicine and psychiatry, he became assistant editor of *The Lancet*. At the outbreak of war, in 1939, he became a neuropsychiatric specialist with the RNVR, and in 1941 he moved to the Ministry of Information where he was Director of Home Intelligence. He established the Wartime Social Survey. At this time he was developing his ideas for what subsequently became the National Health Service. In 1945 he resigned his ministerial post to stand as a Labour candidate and was elected in the post-war Labour administration. He had a part in the formulation of the government's health and education programmes until he lost his seat in 1950.

From 1950 to 1964 he was a member of Harlow New Town development corporation and during that time he was Medical Director of Harlow's industrial health service. During this time he wrote his classical work *Good General Practice*.

He was made a Life Peer in 1958. He was involved in resolving the doctors' strike in Saskatchewan in 1962 and he was Vice-Chancellor of the Memorial University of Newfoundland from 1967 to 1973.

Throughout this time Lord Taylor was writing regularly in medical journals and elsewhere. He had a particular gift for novel and practical ideas and describing them with lucidity. He was a most delightful person in private life; frank, straightforward and generous in his comments about other people. He was a most entertaining conversationalist and a superb correspondent. He was a great encourager of those junior to him in the profession and he managed to convey the notion that anything is possible if one applies oneself, like him, with sufficient energy and enthusiasm.

Lord Taylor is survived by his wife, Lady Charity Taylor, who, as well as being medically qualified, was previously governor of Holloway Prison, and his daughter and two sons. In the death of Lord Taylor the College has lost a good friend, a distinguished and most unusual psychiatrist involved actively in public life, and an honorary Fellow of great prestige.

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