David James, FRCPsych, FRCPS (Glasgow, Hon), DCH, DipEd, DPM
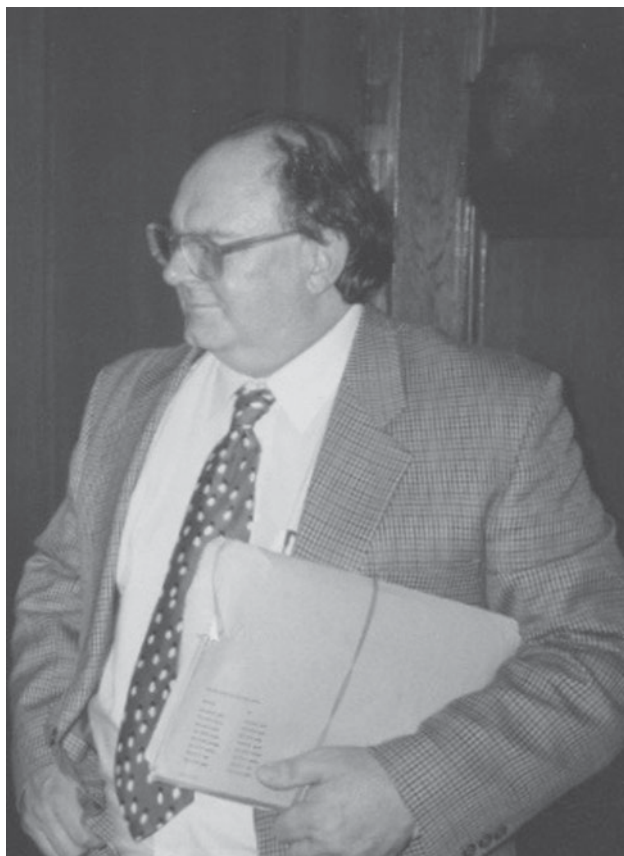
Formerly Consultant Child Psychiatrist, Royal Hospital for Sick Children and Knightswood Clinic, Glasgow, Scotland, UK

David James, who died on 5 May 2018 at the age of 79, was one of three pioneer consultant child psychiatrists appointed in 1971 to develop a Department of Child and Family Psychiatry in the newly rebuilt Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Yorkhill, Glasgow. During higher training in psychiatry in the West Midlands, he studied the interplay of physical and mental disorder at Birmingham Children's Hospital. This expertise, together with his perspective on deprived families, was in demand in Glasgow at a time of rapid advances in paediatrics. He worked closely with the Yorkhill Renal Team to address psychosocial challenges arising in the new paediatric dialysis and transplantation service.

His work at Yorkhill laid the foundation for an award-winning paediatric liaison service, and, in 1989, his contribution to paediatrics was recognised with an honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.

Facing pressures to base child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) entirely in the community, David fought hard for the continuation of a hospital psychiatric service. He became a consultant in Knightswood community CAMHS but also remained one of a small number of paediatric hospital-based psychiatrists in the UK, sustaining the Yorkhill service until a policy shift allowed the appointment of colleagues to develop a modern paediatric liaison service.

David enjoyed multidisciplinary working but was conscious of the particular responsibilities of doctors. He cherished the close relationships between paediatric specialists that grew up in the Children's Hospital. At a time when many child psychiatric teams were reluctant to use medical diagnoses, and some would not prescribe, David advocated for medical expertise, while awareness of the family and the social context of medical transactions informed his practice and prescribing. He was an early practitioner of family therapy. When faced with lack of progress, David always retained hope and when other professionals had decided that no more could be done he would continue his work with patients and their families, with some remarkable results. An enthusiastic teacher, he shared his wide experience through carefully co-authored textbook chapters.

Born in Harrogate and proud of his Yorkshire heritage, David studied medicine at Sheffield University, with house jobs at Sheffield Children's Hospital. In a year out of medicine, with teaching practice in an Approved School, he obtained a Diploma in Education and started to consider training as a child psychiatrist. After a spell in paediatrics at the Sheffield Children's Hospital, he moved back to psychiatry at Mapperley Hospital. Early in his career, as one of a Sheffield University team studying 'problem families', he co-authored a Royal College of Psychiatrists book, 'Families without Hope' (1975), which has been labelled a 'medical classic'.[1]

David met Hilary, his future wife, in Nottingham. Respect for her career as an educational psychologist broadened David's expertise; he was highly knowledgeable about the effects of developmental and psychiatric disorders in the classroom. He leaves his wife, their two surviving children and four grandchildren, of whom he was very proud. His older daughter, also a doctor, pre-deceased him by three years.

Reference

1 Brewer C. Medical Classics, Families without hope. *BMJ* 2012; **345**: e8341.

Michael Morton