

examiner going in and out of the room during the course of the half-hour the patient is being examined; no physical examination is conducted during this half-hour.

The examiners are very sensitive to the high anxiety exhibited by candidates during the course of the examination and there definitely appears to be a commonality in this phenomenon for those taking oral examinations, both in the UK as well as in the USA.

We applaud Drs Persaud and Meux for suggesting that we may, indeed, benefit from learning of the perceptions and concerns of our patients regarding the competency of the psychiatrist that we are testing.

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Molecular genetic research in schizophrenia

DEAR SIRS

Families with two or more schizophrenic members are needed to help with MRC funded projects at University College and Middlesex School of Medicine. The research is attempting to detect genes involved in manic depression and schizophrenia by linkage methods with DNA polymorphisms. We hope to replicate our finding of a genetic linkage in schizophrenia on chromosome 5.

This work is highly dependent for its success on the ascertainment of families with two or more schizophrenic members. We would be very pleased to be put in touch with any suitable families that have come to the attention of *Bulletin* readers. The research requires that a blood sample is taken from all the family members and that they are interviewed. Informed consent will be sought and strict confidentiality will be maintained.

Please write to Dr H. Gurling or Dr T. Sharma, Department of Psychiatry, UCMSM, Wolfson Building, Riding House Street, London W1N 8AA or phone us on 071 380 9474/9475 or 071-636 8333 extension 3305 or fax 071-323 1459.

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Psychiatric consultants based in community mental health centres

DEAR SIRS

Since the mid-1980s I and many of my consultant colleagues in Devon have been based in community mental health centres. Previously we were based in mental hospitals, where we spent 70% of our time looking after hundreds of in-patients. We now spend 80% of our time in the community looking after out-patients, and only 20% of our time in small DGH units (where recently I was responsible for only one in-patient, although normally there are between eight and ten patients under my care).

From talking to consultants from other regions at various meetings throughout the country it becomes clear that many of them are working sessions in community mental health centres and a much smaller, though increasing number are actually based in community mental health centres. It is the latter which I am interested in contacting and wonder whether you could help me in any way to do so? I have contacted the Association of Community Mental Health Centres who tell me that very few doctors, let alone consultants, attend their meetings. I would be very grateful for any help you can give me.

RICHARD ORR

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