

ing for various examinations the previous generation has instituted. We are concerned about the use of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) in psychiatric examinations.

Multiple Choice Questions have the advantage that they save a lot of time for examiners. They have the disadvantage that they can test only facts, or, at most, a factually-oriented type of understanding. This disadvantage will remain even if the problem of their concentration on peripheral minutiae is overcome, because it is inherent in their form.

We have two points to make: one about education and the other about the development of British psychiatry. The first point is that MCQs do not encourage the candidate to read the various subjects broadly and intelligently, but in a silly way, grasping after footnotes that might have attracted the examiner's eye. The second point is more complex and philosophical.

Psychiatry must be both an art and a science. As an art it encompasses not only psychotherapy but also the practicalities of rehabilitation, titrating medication against symptoms and making judgements about people's lives. MCQs could only trivialize these issues, whereas psychiatry as a science is more amenable to them. Therefore, if they are favoured because computers can mark them, a bias towards science is created.

Science has a good reputation at present. It has

revolutionized the treatment of psychoses and great optimism has been invested in the idea that it will produce more helpful discoveries (Reich, 1982). However, society has reached a watershed. In some spheres, science has advanced to the point at which it becomes dangerous and needs to be contained by humanity. Hence any notion that progress in science is inherently good must be suspect. Psychiatry is the most personal branch of medicine and seems to us to contain many strands for development besides impersonal science. William James (1896) argued that many important questions could not be formulated until psychology developed a language of emotion. Psychiatric education must be imaginative and not enslaved to computers if the next generation of psychiatrists is really going to make worthwhile advances.

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JAMES, W. (1896) The sentiment of rationality. In *Essays in Popular Philosophy* New York; Dover.

The College

Winter Quarterly Meeting, 1983

The Winter Quarterly Meeting and the Maudsley Bequest Lectures were held at the Royal Society of Medicine, London, on 8 and 9 February 1983 under the Presidency of Professor Kenneth Rawnsley.

SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

Members who were unable to attend the meeting and are interested in obtaining the text of some of the talks are asked to write to Miss N. Cobbing at the College address. These requests will be forwarded to the individual speakers who will send photocopies or reprints, if they have them, or otherwise reply.

Monday 7 February

The seventeenth Blake Marsh Lecture, 'Changing Sociological and Clinical Patterns in Mental Handicap', was given by Dr D. A. Primrose of the Royal Scottish National Hospital, Larbert. The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr J. Jancar.

Tuesday 8 February—Maudsley Bequest Lectures

- The French approach to classification—Professor P. J. Pichot
The psychopharmacology of suicide—Dr S. A. Montgomery
ECT: Myth and reality—Professor Sydney Brandon
The contra-indications and dangers of psychotherapy—Dr Sidney Crown
Psychiatric disorder in the community: Primary care and specialist services—Dr Paul Williams
The Mental Health (Amendment) Act 1982—Dr J. R. Hamilton

Wednesday 9 February—Maudsley Bequest Lectures

- Current developments in the study of human memory—Dr A. D. Baddeley
Psychological and psychiatric aspects of cancer—Dr Steven Greer
Family and social influences on schizophrenia—Dr Julian Leff

Childhood antecedents of psychiatric disorder in adult life—
Professor M. Rutter
Delinquency: Its causal factors and long-term outcome—
Professor D. J. West
Family therapy in psychosomatic disorders—Professor H.
Charles Fishman

Other sessions

On 8 February there was a Dependence/Addiction Group Discussion on 'Diconal', and a Trainees' Forum on the subject of formulation. On 9 February there was a film session showing 'Home Help' and 'Ashwood Day Centre'. There was also a meeting of the Psychiatric Tutors' Subcommittee and the Psychotherapy Section held a workshop on the use of spouse as co-therapist, 'Divided We Fall'.

BUSINESS MEETING

The Business Meeting was held on Wednesday 9 February 1983.

Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 and 19 November 1982 would be published shortly (*Bulletin*, August 1983, 7, 150–52).

Obituary

The Registrar announced with regret the names of the members who had died since the last College meeting.

Registrar's Report

PROFESSOR GERALD TIMBURY presented the Registrar's report:

'Since my last report, given on 19 November 1982, Council has met on 18 January and the Court of Electors on 13 December. The Executive and Finance Committee has held two meetings on 10 December and 14 January.

The Court of Electors approved 217 passes in the Preliminary Test (48 per cent) and 145 passes in the Membership (49 per cent).

The Laughlan Prize for the best performance in the Membership Examination has been awarded to Dr S. P. Wellstood-Eason.

Council has approved nominations for service on the new Mental Health Act Commission. We have been informed that there will be 20 doctors, the bulk of them psychiatrists, on the Commission, which will total 70 members. Two or three psychiatrists will be on the Central Policy Committee. The Working Party of the Public Policy Committee considering the Mental Health Act is now actively engaged in reviewing the various steps which will be required to implement the Act. It is hoped to publish a leaflet before the summer which will summarize the essential parts of the new legislation.

Council were pleased to learn that a biennial prize for

work in Adolescent Psychiatry has been generously donated in memory of the late Gillian Page and the prize will bear her name.

The Special Committee dealing with the political abuse of psychiatry has produced a statement on psychiatric practice in South Africa. The Committee has not found any evidence of the abuse of psychiatry treatment for political purposes although economically disadvantaged patients, most of whom are black, do appear to receive poorer care than the more privileged section of that community. As agreed by Council, a report of the Committee's findings will be published in the *Bulletin* shortly (June 1983, 7, 115) and I have sent the report to our members in South Africa and asked for their comments.

The Bye-laws Committee has reported to Council that there is support for the introduction of a new form of Associateship and also for revising the period of office of members of Council and other important committees. There is also support for revising the electoral system for Sub-Deans so that in future Sub-Deans could be elected by Council. Detailed amendments to the Bye-laws will be presented to Council soon and the Annual Meeting for your consideration.

Council has agreed that the College should create a Research Unit and has invited the Appeal Committee to consider how funds might be raised. The Unit would probably consist of a Director and one or two staff members and would require to purchase or lease its own premises. Further information on this proposal can be expected soon.

Council has approved the formation of a special committee to produce a book for a general readership on drugs and drug dependence. Professor Griffith Edwards has agreed to chair this committee.

The College has taken action to attempt to prevent the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, now before Parliament, from giving the police power to search medical records. Letters have been sent to the Home Secretary and certain Members of Parliament.

A small Working Party had produced evidence for the Government Committee of Inquiry into Human Fertilization and Embryology. The Mental Deficiency Section has produced a document on Mental Handicap Services which has been approved by Council with a few alterations and will be available soon (*Bulletin*, July 1983, 7, 131–34).

Dr Julie Hollyman has been elected Chairman of the Collegiate Trainees Committee and now represents trainees on the Executive and Finance Committee.

College Officers went to the DHSS on 2 December 1982 for an annual discussion with members of the Department. It was agreed, in principle, to work towards a major conference in 1984 to discuss future planning and development of mental health services.'

Resolutions

The following amendment to the final paragraph of the

resolution passed at the Quarterly Business meeting of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, 20 November 1981, had been proposed by Dr P. Sainsbury and seconded by Dr G. Low Beer.

“... this General Assembly resolves that the withdrawal of the membership of the All-Union Society of Neurologists and Psychiatrists of the World Psychiatric Association should now take place until such time as ... to an end.”

Professor Rawnsley announced that the World Psychiatric Association had informed the Royal College of Psychiatrists that the All-Union Society of Psychiatrists of the USSR had resigned from membership of the World

Psychiatric Association. The All-Union Society had written to all member societies of the World Psychiatric Association and the College was awaiting this letter. Since the resolution in 1981, the College had received communications and a visit from the Russian Embassy as well as an unconfirmed invitation to take part in a multi-national delegation to visit the USSR.

Dr P. Sainsbury and Dr G. Low Beer expressed their regret at the decision of the Russian psychiatrists. It was hoped that in a few years the situation might ameliorate and channels of communication would be re-opened. In the meantime the Special (Political Abuse of Psychiatry) Committee should endeavour to envisage ways in which pressure could be maintained on the Soviet Union.

Reports from the Divisions

Welsh Division

The Welsh Division held two meetings in the course of 1982. The Spring Meeting was held at Cefn Coed Hospital, Swansea, on 3 April.

The morning programme was provided by members of the consultant staff of Cefn Coed Hospital. Dr T. G. Davies spoke on ‘Bedlam in Wales’—a history of the evolution of Psychiatric Services in South Wales in the 19th century. Dr Gareth Hughes, in ‘The Self-Poisoners of Aqua Sulis’, presented a study of overdosage in the City of Bath, relating the incidence of self-poisoning to a variety of social parameters.

In the afternoon papers were presented by members of the Postgraduate Section and the Section of Mental Subnormality. In the first Dr Marshall Annear (Morgannwg Hospital) reviewed the development of Postgraduate Education in Wales, while in the second, Dr W. B. Spry (Garth Angharad Hospital) presented a paper on recent developments at that hospital.

At its Biannual General Meeting, the Chairman of the Division for the past two years, Dr J. Cuthill (Morgannwg Hospital), relinquished office and Dr J. M. Hughes (St Cadoc’s Hospital) took over, thanking the retiring Chairman and Secretary (Dr A. Kellam) for their work for the College in Wales.

In the evening the Welsh Division Dinner was held at College House, University College, Swansea. Professor Rawnsley was formally congratulated by the Division on his election as President and received new Members and Fellows.

The Autumn Meeting was held at St Cadoc’s Hospital, Caerleon, on 4 December. Dr Brian Calcraft (Royal Gwent Hospital) spoke on the ‘Irritable Bowel Syndrome’ and Dr Delyth Alldrick (St Cadoc’s Hospital) presented a paper on ‘Aspects of Liaison Psychiatry’.

The Psychotherapy and Child Psychiatry Sections contributed to the afternoon programme. Dr Ronald Westerholm spoke on the work of a Psychotherapy Unit at Cefn Coed Hospital, while Dr G. S. Thomas (St Cadoc’s Hospital) reviewed the literature on dysmorphophobia and summarized the management of adolescents who had presented to the Adolescent Unit with such a picture.

The Executive Committee met quarterly throughout the year and reported to the Welsh Office on the following: the review of ECT treatment in Wales; comments on *Care in the Community*; matters of concern in regard to the Mental Health (Amendment) Act proposals; breaches of confidentiality in an HAS Report; and the proposals for Services for the Mentally Handicapped in Wales.

Dr Cuthill was nominated by the Welsh Division and appointed by the Council as Regional Psychiatrist in place of Professor Rawnsley. Dr E. Kapp retired from the Editorship of the College’s ‘Welsh Newsletter’ and Dr Gareth Jones took over.

The Welsh Postgraduate Committee (following pressure from the Executive and the Postgraduate Section in Wales) agreed to recognize a Working Party of Clinical Tutors in Psychiatry.

A. B. ROLFE
Honorary Secretary

Midlands Division

The Spring Meeting of the Midlands Division took place at the Education Centre and Main Hall at Hollymoor Hospital, Birmingham on 18 March 1983.

Professor C. P. Seager (Chairman) opened the scientific session, which was attended by 250 delegates. He introduced Professor R. Bluglass who gave a talk entitled ‘The Mental