

psychology and sociology but do not identify psychiatrists with this task.

The authors appear to have minimised two very important factors regarding recruitment. Because they have concentrated on the way psychiatry is presented to medical students, quoting at least two American professors who have pulled more students into psychiatry by making the topic unashamedly part of medicine, they have not given enough weight to the push factors away from psychiatry. Negative attitudes towards psychiatry among medical colleagues are mentioned but there are no suggestions that these should be tackled directly to improve recruitment.

The other factor is the pull to other specialities. Many would-be psychiatrists go into general practice so that they can work in the community and avoid

many years of junior hospital posts. This is not without advantage provided they go into general practice well-trained in the relevant areas of psychiatry. In fact, recruitment into psychiatry from GP trainee posts is increasing and some doctors may choose this career even when they did not consider it during the pre-registration year, when they would have been surveyed regarding career choice. Such changes of career choice during early post-graduate training has not been fully considered by the report, which otherwise constitutes an interesting compilation of views in the early 1980s. It will be interesting to re-read this in ten years time to see how much has changed during the 1990s.

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Audiotape review

Tranquilliser Independence (Audiocassette, side 1: 30 mins., side 2: 22 mins.)

Producer: Dr Cosmo Hallstrom

Distribution: Charing Cross Hospital (Dr Hallstrom), Fulham Palace Rd., London W68RF

Sale: £5.95 (Proceeds to research funds).

This is a self-help cassette based on the advice given to patients who wish to stop taking tranquillisers; side two offers alternative relaxation techniques.

A number of questions are raised and answered on side 1, such as what is anxiety, what is dependence, what are tranquillisers and why stop taking them. Practical advice is offered on where to get help, how to cope with panic attacks and how the family can help. Guidance is given on the distinction between short and long-acting benzodiazepines, the desirable speed of cutting down and the need to think positively and to modify a whole life-style. Patients are reassured about any long-term harm or permanent brain damage and that withdrawal will not precipitate "madness".

The presentation and quality of recording are excellent, a chatty "not read" style resembling a personal consultation is adopted, and the overall effect is therapeutically reassuring. The extensive practical

advice is offered at an appropriate level for the motivated patient, although at the beginning there is some assumption that the verbalisation of unfamiliar pharmacological and trade names will be readily assimilated. As it is important to distinguish, for example, between major and minor tranquillisers, and anti-depressants, a simple printed handout illustrating this would be useful.

Side 2, which continues the same firmly persuasive and therapeutic style, goes through a programme of relaxation techniques item by item. This is timed so that it can be played when the patient is undergoing the exercises, and the writer can confirm that its imagery "sitting on a bench on a warm summer's day, listening to the birds in a beautiful garden" produced a strong sensation of being "at peace with the world ..."

This tape offers a package of considerable practical value to the half-million people in England alone who are apparently dependent, in many cases unnecessarily, on tranquillising drugs. Strongly recommended.

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