

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

The conditions under which postgraduate education is made available under the National Health Service, which has now been in operation for 14 years, have recently been criticized in Great Britain. The position has been reviewed in an article¹ by Sir George Pickering, Regius Professor of Medicine in the University of Oxford. Postgraduate education is provided in the undergraduate teaching hospitals throughout the country and the institutes of the Postgraduate Federation of London, where it is regarded as satisfactory, and in the hospitals under the Regional Boards, where unfavourable criticism is levelled against it. In these various hospitals the postgraduate students hold posts as house officer (corresponding to our internships), senior house officer, registrar, and senior registrar. Two-thirds of all these posts are held in the regional board hospitals.

It is recognized that the clinical work performed by postgraduate students should be carried out under a master, in cooperation with a radiologist, a pathologist, and others, and subject to discussion, criticism and correction; otherwise the educational value of the work is greatly impaired. It is because of the lack of these and other facilities that the postgraduate education provided in the regional board hospitals is condemned.

When the NHS was established, the regional board hospitals were regarded as institutions where an efficient service for the sick was to be provided as cheaply as possible, and provision was not made for medical education. Yet it is to these hospitals that the majority of young doctors have to go, not only for pre-registration posts, but also for subsequent registrarships. The facilities are not there, and in many instances the senior physicians and surgeons are not interested in medical education.

Notwithstanding these defects, the NHS regional board hospitals, together with the undergraduate teaching hospitals they are associated with, provide an excellent framework on which a system of postgraduate education could be built; and the Ministry's new Hospital Plan will assist greatly. Hitherto postgraduate education has been mainly concerned with the specialist services, and the needs of the main body of graduates, particularly those going into general practice, have not been fully considered. Postgraduate education was discussed at a recent conference of the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, and Sir George Pickering¹ gives his impression of the views that were put forward there briefly as follows:

Units for postgraduate education should be established in the larger hospitals of the NHS regional boards, where the following requirements will be necessary:

1. *The services* provided should be of high standard, including (a) general medicine and surgery, (b) clinical pathology and chemical pathology, (c) radiology, (d) a well-organized postmortem service, (e) medical records under proper control, and (f) outpatient facilities. It is the

quality of the service, not the size, that is the decisive factor.

2. *Physical facilities* should include: (a) An adequate medical library conveniently sited. (b) Adequate ward laboratories and side-rooms where house officers and registrars can themselves examine body fluids and make simple measurements. (c) Rooms for meetings, large and small—not necessarily to be used exclusively for this purpose. (d) A room for the clinical tutor. Other facilities, desirable but less urgent, include (e) a room where consultants, registrars, housemen, and general practitioners may take lunch together, and (f) married quarters for resident staff.

3. *An educational atmosphere.* The most important objective is to achieve an atmosphere of liveliness, curiosity and enquiry. This depends on a number of factors, including the following:

(a) The standard of excellence demanded by the staff from their registrars and housemen. If histories are first-class, physical examinations accurate and complete, and progress notes accurate and up-to-date; and if the registrars and housemen make simple examinations of body fluids, watch their patients being screened or operated on, and regularly visit the postmortem room—then it can be said that the most important functions of the teacher have been fulfilled.

(b) Each hospital unit needs a man responsible for the education programme and the necessary facilities, and to advise interested graduates. He should probably work through a committee of his colleagues, and of course should have the necessary time for the work.

(c) Postgraduate education programmes should comprise discussions centred on patients, ideas, new work, etc. They should be arranged at fixed times and like the 'grand round', should be open to neighbouring practitioners, whose efficiency and morale they would greatly influence.

(d) Many programmes have failed because neither the senior nor junior staff could spare time from their routine duties to attend. It is essential to provide time, and staffing must be generous to allow of this. If the juniors fail to respond it is almost certainly the seniors who are to blame.

It is considered that, given drive and some small funds, every region in Great Britain could probably establish at least two centres in the coming year. They already have good lecture theatres and libraries. It could then be decided how many other centres were needed and which hospitals should cease to provide training posts.

This consideration of the position as regards postgraduate training in Great Britain is of interest in the consideration of the same problem in South Africa, especially with reference to internships.

1. Pickering, G. (1962): Brit. Med. J., 1, 422.

OPENBARE LESING BY DIE ALGEMENE MEDIESE KONGRESSE

Soos lede van die Vereniging weet, is dit gebruikelik dat 'n openbare lesing oor 'n mediese onderwerp op die Sondagaand voor die opening van die gereelde, tweejaarlikse, algemene Mediese Kongres gehou word.

Voordat die onlangse Kongres in Kaapstad gehou is, het die Tak Wes-Kaapland die aanbeveling gemaak dat dié lesing benoem word deur 'n spesiale naam daaraan te gee. Twee aanbevelings is aan die Federale Raad voorgelê: eerstens, dat die lesing genoem word 'Die Van Riebeeck-lesing', en, tweedens, dat die lesing genoem word na 'n man wat baie bekend was in die Vereniging as sy tweede President en wat meer as 30 jaar lank in die Federale Raad gedien het — 'Die Lindsay Sandes Gedenklesing'.

Die Federale Raad kon nie tot 'n besluit kom oor die saak nie, en het toe ooreengekom om die saak na die Takke te verwys vir bespreking en aanbevelings. Na die ontvangs van 'n omsendbrief wat die Sekretaris na al die Takke gestuur het, het verskeie Taksekretarisse geskryf om te sê dat hul Takke die saak bespreek het. Die volgende is sommige van die aanbevelings wat deur Takke aan die hand gegee is:

Die Tak Griekwaland-Wes en die Tak O.V.S. Goudvelde meen dat die gedagte om die lesing 'Die Lindsay Sandes Gedenklesing' te noem, 'n goeie aanbeveling is. Die Tak Wes-Transvaal wil die lesing graag 'Die Karl Bremerlesing'

noem. Die Tak Grens het gevoel dat baie ander lede van die Vereniging net so 'n groot aanspraak op dié eer kan maak as wyle dr. Lindsay Sandes, en hulle stel dus voor dat 'n verdere lys van benamings ter oorweging opgestel word.

Die Tak Suid-Transvaal is van mening dat ons Kongresse nie gehou word om die name van individuele persone te laat voortleef nie, en hulle voel dat die aanbevelings van die Sekretaris in die omsendbrief dus nie vir hulle aanneemlik is nie. Die Tak Middellandse Kaap is nie ten gunste daarvan dat die lesing op hierdie stadium 'n naam kry nie, en die Tak Oranje-Vrystaat en Basoetoland meen dat elke betrokke Tak, waar 'n Kongres gehou word, maar self 'n naam vir die lesing moet bedink. Dit beteken natuurlik dat die lesing dan elke keer 'n ander naam sal dra.

By heroorweging van die saak het die Tak Wes-Kaapland, wat die eerste met die gedagte van die benoeming van die lesing voor die dag gekom het, die hoop uitgespreek dat die saak, voordat dit as afgehandel beskou word, nog eers in die *Tydskrif* bespreek sal word. Alle lede van die Vereniging wat sterk voel oor hierdie saak, word dus uitgenooi om aan ons te skryf en hulle menings uiteen te sit.