

ASPEKTE VAN DIE PROFESSIONELE VERHOUDING TUSSEN SPESIALISTE EN ALGEMENE PRAKTISYNS

By die geleentheid van sy onlangse sitting in Kaapstad is die jongste beskikbare opgawes oor die aantal geregistreerde mediese praktisyns in die land weer, soos gewoonlik, aan die Suid-Afrikaanse Geneeskundige en Tandheelkundige Raad voorgelê vir kennisname en oorweging. Uit hierdie syfers blyk die volgende:

Aan die einde van 1960 was daar altesaam 7,939 geneeshere in die land, waarvan 1,591 geregistreerde spesialiste was. In 1959 was hierdie syfers 7,788 en 1,505 respektiewelik. Dit beteken dus dat daar oor die algemeen ongeveer 1 spesialis teenoor 4 algemene praktisyns was. Gedurende die bespreking van hierdie aspek van die saak het prof. H. W. Snyman, van Pretoria, tereg aangetoon dat die globale verhouding min of meer normaal was.

Die saak is egter nie net 'n kwessie van absolute verhouding nie. Daar is in Suid-Afrika 'n groot wanverdeling van geneeshere met 'n relatiewe groot opeenhoping van spesialiste in die stedelike gebiede. Dit beteken dus dat die verhouding tussen spesialiste in die stede soms nagenoeg 1 : 2 is, teenoor 'n verhouding van 1 : 12 of meer in sekere plattelandse gebiede. Bloot die feit van hierdie wanverdeling verander al die hele saak. Daarby het dr. A. W. S. Sichel aangetoon dat die genoemde syfers op 'n ongesonde tendens dui, byvoorbeeld, dat terwyl die persentasie toename van algemene praktisyns gedurende die afgelope jaar minder as 1 persent was, die toename van spesialiste nagenoeg 6 persent was. As hierdie tendens sou voortduur, en dit wil voorkom of dit wel die geval is, dan sal ons weldra 'n relatiewe sowel as absolute wanverhouding hê tussen spesialiste en algemene praktisyns in die land.

Hierdie hele saak sal vroër of later weer oorweeg moet word, byvoorbeeld in die lig van die vraag of dit nie gewens sou wees om weer terug te gaan na 'n stelsel van suiwer konsulerende spesialiste nie. Ons weet nie wat die antwoord op dié vraag is nie; ons stel maar net die vraag om nadenke te prikkel. Wat ons egter tog wel op 'n praktiese vlak aan die saak kan doen, is om alle middele binne ons vermoë in

werking te stel om die goeie gesindheid en bevredigende professionele samewerking tussen spesialiste en algemene praktisyns te probeer bevorder. Om hierdie rede haal ons dan nou ook hier die reëls van die Mediese Raad aan wat spesifiek oor hierdie aspek van die saak handel. Die reëls waarna ons verwys is reëls 11 - 14 van die 'reëls aangaande die registrasie van spesialiste . . . en die voorwaardes betreffende die beheer van die praktyke van geneeshere . . . wie se spesialiteite geregistreer is'. Reëls 11 - 14 lees soos volg:

.11. 'n Spesialis mag nie 'n pasiënt van 'n ander praktisyn, hetsy hy 'n spesialis of 'n algemene praktisyn is, oorneem nie behalwe met die toestemming van die betrokke praktisyn. Sodanige toestemming mag nie onredelikerwys teruggehou word nie.

.12. 'n Spesialis mag nie tuisbesoeke aflê nie behalwe op versoek of met die toestemming van 'n algemene praktisyn.

.13. 'n Spesialis kan enigeen behandel wat regstreeks na hom gaan vir raadpleging.

.14. 'n Spesialis wat deur 'n pasiënt geraadpleeg word of wat 'n pasiënt behandel, moet alle redelike maatreëls tref om die samewerking te verseker van die pasiënt se algemene mediese praktisyn of tandarts (d.w.s. algemene tandheelkundige praktisyn), na gelang van die geval.

Opmerking. Niks in hierdie reëls mag in enige opsig inbreuk maak op die gebruikelike etiese standaarde met betrekking tot 'n toestand van nood nie.

Navolging, in die besonderheid, van hierdie reëls sal veel daartoe bydra om die verhouding tussen spesialiste en algemene praktisyns op 'n goeie voet te hou. By 'n konsiderasie van die verhouding tussen mense is reëls egter nie genoeg nie. Gesindheid tel meer as reëls, en ons beroep is op alle praktiserende geneeshere om, soos die meeste van hulle in elk geval doen, op so 'n manier op te tree dat reëls nie eers nodig is nie. Veral in hierdie tye van spanning en drukte waaronder almal, ook geneeshere, leef, kan ons nie genoeg daarop bedag wees om die eer en status van ons as individuele praktisyns en van die mediese professie as 'n geheel, bo verdenking te hou nie.

MALPRAXIS INSURANCE

The Atlas Assurance Company Limited announce that, in accordance with their policy to provide members of this Association with the widest possible cover for professional liabilities, they have extended their Malpraxis Policy to indemnify policy-holders against damages and costs incurred in the defence of actions for libel, slander, or defamation of character where such actions arise out of professional acts. This additional cover is given without increase in existing premium charges and will be effective immediately. Within the next week or two policy-holders will receive printed endorsements setting out the precise terms of the extension.

The 'Atlas' have also asked us to bring two important points to the attention of our members. These are:

1. *Limits of liability.* Although the Company makes a practice at each renewal date of reminding practitioners to review the limits of liability under their policies, many policy-holders continue to carry limits which may prove completely inadequate for their full protection. The minimum limit of indemnity for which policies are issued is R4,000 for any one claim, but it is obvious that this would not go very far in the event of a serious claim arising, and all practitioners are earnestly requested to give careful thought to a more realistic indemnity. The Company will continue to attach

slips to renewal notices setting out a scale of premiums for various limits of liability up to R50,000 for any one claim, and all that is necessary is to advise the Company if a higher limit is required when an insurance is renewed. If desired, the Company is prepared to quote for a limit in excess of R50,000.

2. *Partnerships.* The Liability Policy provides a personal indemnity to the insured and consequently a separate policy is issued to each individual doctor indemnifying him for his personal acts. Where two or more doctors practice in partnership, therefore, it is essential that each and every partner should carry adequate liability cover with preferably a similar limit of indemnity in each case. It will be clear that if, for example, one of the partners is uninsured and judgment in a civil case is given against him, then the result-

ing financial loss may well have a serious adverse effect on the partnership as such. Another possibility is that a partnership may be sued for the acts of one of its members and, to overcome this, the Company is willing (provided all partners carry 'Atlas' policies) to endorse the individual policies so that, in the event of a claim against the partnership for the acts of one of them, the protection will apply to those 'innocent' members of the partnership who may be brought into the action, notwithstanding that they themselves were not concerned in the treatment or the cause giving rise to that action.

The local Branch of the Company, through whom your insurance is placed, will be pleased to advise and assist you in this matter of arranging suitable protection for partnerships.

THE MEDICAL DIRECTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Knox Printing and Publishing Company is to be congratulated on its enterprise in producing a Medical Directory for South Africa. What a wealth of information it contains! There is hardly a facet of medical professional life that is not mentioned in one form or another, and all is subject to easy reference.

It is obvious that the Editor, Dr. Crowhurst Archer, and his staff undertook a monumental task in the first compilation of such a work, and as a profession we should be grateful. Not only will this fulfil a long-felt need, but it is certainly

evidence that the medical profession has reached an important milestone in its progress. It is an effort that merits the support of all practitioners so that it may long continue to serve the profession.

The *Medical Directory of South Africa* was published in December 1960, but it has been styled the 1960-61 edition since the information in it was kept right up to date. The price of the Directory is R4.20 and it is obtainable directly from the publishers or from the leading booksellers throughout South Africa.