

Midlands Division Trainees Day 1990*

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Professor Gethin Morgan, Chief Examiner of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Dr George Milner, Part I Examiner, and Dr R. Thavasoathy, Part II Examiner discussed the content of the MRCPsych Examination, technique and qualities required by candidates in order to pass the Clinical Examination and ways of trying to assimilate the knowledge required in order to achieve success.

In presenting a psychiatric history, the importance of being systematic, comprehensive, coherent, internally consistent, of adopting a multidimensional approach and of being able to distinguish between fact and opinion, direct, indirect, descriptive and explanatory information were emphasised.

The candidate's technique and qualities such as being tactful, considerate, empathic, sensitive, and the ability to control his/herself and the interview were also considered. It was also important to develop an appropriate sense of priorities, show awareness of other professionals and 'be safe'. The use of the word 'formulation' had now been discarded. The candidate would instead be asked for his assessment of the case – i.e., his overall view of the case describing salient features in the history, mental state diagnosis, differential diagnosis, the supposed aetiological factors and in the Part II, management.

Dr Robert Jones, Senior Lecturer in Psychogeriatrics, concentrated on management issues for trainees, Dr Helena Waters, formerly Consultant
*Held at the Birmingham Medical Institute on 4 September 1990.

Psychotherapist and currently a Management Consultant, David Bromley, General Manager for Community and Mental Health Services in Solihull, and Dr Fiona Caldicott, Consultant Psychotherapist, Dean of the College and Unit General Manager discussed different aspects of management.

The importance of 'managing me first' and the ability to deal with stress in management was considered. Differences in management and administration in terms of their objectives, roles, attitudes, skills and success were highlighted. Management involves primary tasks with broad strategies that are reviewed frequently and is protagonist, risk-taking and success seeking. Administration involves secondary tasks with objectives conceived in general terms that are changed with hindsight and is arbitrary, passive and mistake-avoiding.

Several different aspects of management were described including operational management, environmental scanning, policy formulation, resource management, public accountability, and multi-professional attitudes. Practical difficulties such as resource allocation, multiprofessional services, political interference, pay awards and the pace of change were discussed.

The 'doctor's role in management' was felt to be 'absolutely essential'. Non-involvement was seen to be detrimental to the service. However it was suggested that the degree of change in the National Health Service had provoked a lot of anxiety which was impairing the Service.

Southern Division Trainees Day

The Southern Division of the Collegiate Trainees Committee is holding a Trainees Day on Thursday, 5 September 1991, at the Institute of Psychiatry, DeCrespigny Park (off Denmark Hill), London. The theme is 'Violence and the Psychiatric Trainee' and there will be a range of speakers from a variety of

disciplines. The meeting will commence at 10.30 a.m. and end by 4.30 p.m. Attendance is free and lunch will be provided. All Southern Division trainees are encouraged to attend. Further information: Dr David Castle, Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8AZ (telephone 071 703 6333).