

included because their clinical relevance was clear. By looking at each item *per se* rather than global scores, finer quality results could be produced with fewer patients than was possible with the usual drug trial.

Dr Jonathan Chick posed the question 'Can Craftsmen Blame their Tools?' Good craftsmen make their own tools, he suggested. He then discussed problems in developing research instruments such as a standardized interview; frequency, severity, duration and the importance of a time frame were considered. Aspects of reliability, validity, the use of video tapes, questionnaires, and the role of experimenter expectancy were other important matters about which Dr Chick gave useful guidance.

The 'Design of Drug Trials' was lucidly outlined by Dr David Gough; in particular he detailed factors influencing the design of prospective drug trials. He concluded with useful rules: a few simple and precise objectives, end-point measurements, more patients rather than less, a reasonable follow-up, conducting the trial within the capability of one's organization, and seeking advice early, especially from a statistician and from the drug manufacturer.

Dr Nicol Ferrier reviewed the 'Use of Laboratory Techniques and Animal Methods'. Current research using these techniques is at present mainly concerned with the study of neurohumeral transmission and its relation to the functional psychoses. The implications of the various neurohumeral hypotheses of schizophrenia from the research viewpoint were described in some detail, with the various techniques that have been developed to try to clarify them. The development of new techniques themselves also opens up new areas of research and the development of new hypotheses; examples include high performance liquid chromatography, drug level studies, and the measurement of various pituitary hormones.

On the second day Mr Peter Harvey spoke with great clarity and interest about 'Data Organization and Analysis'. Like other speakers he strongly advised the researcher not to be overawed by statistics. Their use in summarizing and

describing data and in helping to make decisions was outlined. Nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio data were defined, and the types of statistics useful to deal with these different forms of data were discussed. Mr Harvey recommended Siegel's book on *Non-parametric Statistics*, and he concluded by emphasizing the distinction between statistical, clinical and scientific significance.

Dr W. I. Fraser in his talk on 'Topics of Research in Mental Handicap', emphasized the scope and potential for the solitary researcher in this field, unlike so many others in medicine. The establishment of a Chair in Mental Handicap at St. George's, the initiative of the Chief Scientist in Scotland, and the DHSS's plans all indicate an increasing emphasis being given to research in mental handicap. He advised that educational and cognitive fields should not be entered into by psychiatrists, but other areas such as psycholinguistics were transdisciplinary, clinically productive and exciting. He then reviewed the many areas in mental handicap where more research is required, e.g. non-verbal behaviour, proneness of the mentally handicapped to dementia, study of attachment theory, bereavement and effects of other life events, reproductive biology and sociology and the need for adequate drug trials.

'Writing Papers and Theses' was fittingly the concluding talk for the Symposium given by Dr Philip Snaith. He gave useful advice, such as in writing the covering letter to editors. In writing the report itself the contributor should study the notes provided by most journals. An introduction should be brief and confined to the reasons for the research being undertaken. In the method section the question 'How was the study done?' should be answered. Various tips were given on writing the results and on the use of tables and figures. In the discussion section the following questions should be answered, 'What does the study mean, how do the findings fit in with those of others, and what does this lead to?'

Lively discussion followed the presentations and one hopes that research in Scotland has been stimulated.

## *Forthcoming Events*

An Introductory Course in Family Therapy will be held over three terms on Monday afternoons, beginning 13 October, 1980, at the **Scottish Institute of Human Relations**. Information: Development Secretary, Scottish Institute of Human Relations, 56 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH13 3QR.

A joint meeting of the **British Medical Anthropology Society** and the **Edinburgh Transcultural Psychiatry Society** will be held on 15 November 1980 at the University of Edinburgh. The theme of the meeting will be 'The Place of Anthropology in Medical Education'. Information: Dr Una Maclean, Department of Community Medicine, Usher Institute, Warrender Park Road, Edinburgh, EH9 1DW.