

between day hospitals and day centres, the number of care staff, the activities, and the age, sex, marital state and living arrangements of the users. The most striking differences were the smaller proportion of staff with qualifications and the less favourable staff-client ratio in the day centres. This seems to underline the warning spelt out by Dr Bennett that we must avoid two standards of care—particularly when there are indications that clients in social services day centres may be more disabled than their day hospital counterparts. In conclusion, this excellent paper reviews the possibilities of the organization and relationship of day hospitals and day centres in the future.

The fourth paper describes the experiences of a clinical psychologist (Margaret McAllan) who became director of an expanding social service day centre, and gives an interesting review of the development of this centre.

Finally, in another descriptive paper, Joy Shires speaks of her rewarding experience with a Travelling Day Hospital where flexibility and a homely informal approach are the watchwords of a multidisciplinary team.

This report will be of interest to all who are involved in day care for the mentally ill, and in particular to those developing new facilities. It explores a wide range of possibilities for both day hospitals and day centres. The similarity between the two is evident, the divergence in their roles less clear, but until all areas have a complete network of community facilities local needs may well dictate the type of provision made. Copies of the report may be obtained from DHSS Mental Health Division, Room C401, Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London SE1 6BY.

CHRISTINE HASSALL

**Caring from Day to Day**, by Sheila Peace  
MIND publication, 1980. £1.55.

This report is very welcome indeed, based as it is on a historical review, critical evaluation and factual research. While the general psychiatrists were in the forefront of the day hospital movement, its potential for the elderly was to a large extent pioneered by geriatricians in many centres throughout Britain.

The survey of day hospitals catering for the mentally infirm elderly eventually concentrated on 27 day hospitals about which full information had been given. The report recognizes that the initiative for setting up day hospitals has rested with individual consultants; also that the setting up of day hospitals requires considerable energy and a degree of controlled aggressiveness.

Staffing levels of each hospital are examined, and it is surprising that 21 per cent of day hospitals are run with less than one day per week of consultant service, and 14 per cent have consultant service only 'when necessary'. Nursing staff

levels, too, are of interest, but the figures given could have been more helpful if they had been presented in terms of whole-time equivalents.

In general, an opportunity has been missed to relate the various levels of provision with the numbers cared for per day, the stated aims of the unit and the subjective impression of the day hospital team as to the adequacy of their staffing levels. Nevertheless, anyone planning a day hospital would be well advised to consult this report.

It is evident from this study that general practitioners appreciate day hospital care, as 77 per cent of referrals come from them. This emphasizes the importance of the primary care team in developing a community-orientated attitude to the care of the elderly.

The important question of transportation merits and receives considerable attention. The observation by Dr Jolley concerning the low priority given to services for the elderly can be echoed by those clinicians who have had to defend their day hospital in recent years.

However acutely ill the elderly person may be, we are told 'that is a 'social' problem, why don't you get the local authority to deal with it?' Yet it should be self-evident that old people should have the same priority as other regular hospital attenders.

This report ends with a series of recommendations which psychiatrists involved in the care of the elderly would find sensible and appropriate. Among these recommendations are: purpose-built premises, a special separate day hospital transport system, earlier intervention, and access to clinical psychologists and remedial staff.

After such a set of favourable comments, any reviewer is entitled to some quibbles. Not all psychogeriatricians would accept that a day hospital for the elderly should be for the 'mentally infirm' (a euphemism for organic psychiatric disorder). Depression, mania, neurosis and paraphrenia may all present with non-specific pictures, such as self-neglect or failure to cope socially. Though these are indistinguishable initially from the symptoms of organic states, the unit should be geared to cope with the full spectrum of psychiatric disorders that will be encountered. Another implicit assumption which I would challenge is that elderly people will have a better deal if they obtain treatment in a day hospital serving psychiatric patients of all ages; all too often even in such institutions they may be victims of 'ageism' and the special social and health problems of the elderly may escape attention.

MIND is to be congratulated on focusing on such an important issue, providing new information and reaching such clear conclusions. I hope that our 'planning teams for the elderly' will read this report and recognize that setting up day hospital services for the elderly is too important to be left to the planners.

The day hospital is a welcome infant, but it is in danger of succumbing to financial starvation.

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