

The College

Training in the Psychiatry of Old Age

[The Registrar, Professor Gerald Timbury, gave the following report to Council at its meeting on 16 June 1981.]

At its meeting on 24 October 1980 Council resolved not to recommend to the DHSS that Psychiatry of Old Age should be recognized as a separate specialty, but agreed to urge that all relevant committees and also the JCHPT should ensure that all future consultants in General Psychiatry should spend a significant part of their time, at general professional and higher training levels, working in units and departments taking a particular interest in the Psychiatry of Old Age.

Following this resolution College committees, Divisions, Sections and Regional Advisers were asked to communicate what progress was being made in implementing this resolution. At the time of writing (15 June 1981) 14 replies have been received. Seven of these have come from Regional Advisers and four from College Divisions. In addition there have been replies from the JCHPT and its General Psychiatry SAC, from the DHSS and from the Section for the Psychiatry of Old Age. All replies have indicated support for the spirit of Council's resolution. In Scotland, all tutors have been approached, and the overwhelming majority state that rotation to psychogeriatric departments is already part of the general professional training of psychiatric registrars and that no serious difficulty is envisaged in increasing this exposure. In the Tayside Region, all registrars or senior registrars rotate for six months to departments specializing in Old Age Psychiatry. In the Republic of Ireland, similar support has been obtained, and the Chairman of the Irish Psychiatric Training Committee has agreed to endeavour to follow the training schedule found in the UK. Regional Advisers have agreed to urge their appropriate regional committees to develop and increase the amount of exposure at

registrar and senior registrar level. In the Oxford Region 14 of the 24 registrars in the Regional rotation scheme already have exposure to the Psychiatry of Old Age, and it is hoped that this may be developed further. In the Midlands, all trainees do see elderly patients but they are not usually attached to a unit designed specifically for this purpose, as such units have been slow to develop.

The letter from the DHSS welcomes the Council's resolution and observes that the DHSS feels some concern at an increase in the number of sub-specialties, as this may impose unnecessary rigidity in training schemes and may pose additional problems in filling appointments in less popular specialties. The JCHPT is already firmly committed to including work with elderly patients in the training of senior registrars in General Psychiatry, and the General Psychiatry SAC now has two representatives of the Psychiatry of Old Age among its members. The Committee intends to continue to insist that rotational training schemes for senior registrars in General Psychiatry should include a period of exposure to work in a unit specializing in the Psychiatry of Old Age. The Court of Electors has noted the Council's resolution, and a recommendation on the content of the Membership Examination has been passed to the Board of Examiners.

Lastly, the reply from the Old Age Section itself indicates that the Section welcomes the additional membership of the GPSAC of the JCHPT, and the Section has also been informed that it will be consulted informally by the DHSS on a variety of topics related to the provision of services.

The Section suggests that the reference in the Council's resolution to 'a significant period of time' should be interpreted as meaning a minimum of six months at both registrar and senior registrar level.

Revised rules regarding withdrawal from the examinations and refund of fees

Notice is hereby given that, with effect from 1 December 1981, the conditions stated in the 'Rules for Entry to the Examinations' concerning Refund of Fees will be rescinded.

The following rules will apply thereafter:

1. No refund of fees will normally be made to candidates who withdraw from the examinations after the closing date for receipt of entries, or who fail to attend for any reason whatsoever.

2. In the case of candidates who withdraw before the closing date for receipt of entries, an administration charge of half the fee paid will be retained.
3. Candidates who enter for both parts of the examination, but fail the Preliminary Test, will only receive a refund of half the fee paid for the second part (i.e., the Membership Examination).

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