



columns

Examiners for the new OSCEs

I have been an examiner for the MRCPsych Part I examination for several years now. However, I am now in an unfortunate situation and having to consider my position as an examiner due to the fact that my employing Trust has decided to consider my leave during the examination as study leave.

The College has introduced objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs) in its Part I examination, and requires examiners who have gained experience in OSCEs conducted by the College. The

problem is that there is only one centre for this examination, this being in London. The examinations are conducted over a period of 3 days, using 12 stations per candidate. The exam goes through some 45 or more candidates in a single day. Some examiners examine on all three days and some less.

The second such examination will take place in October this year, and the College is already finding it difficult to find examiners experienced in OSCEs.

In my opinion, employing authorities that consider their consultant going off to examine in London as having a leisurely walk in Hyde Park, are grossly deluded.

Moreover, the examiner does not get any continuing professional development points for these days, which are merely considered as study leave by the employing authority. Neither does the employing authority's stance allow the examiner to attend the annual Examiners' Committee Meeting in London.

The views of existing examiners and of those aspiring examiners, many of whom I am sure are in a similar situation to mine, would be interesting to hear.

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obituary

Harry Stalker

Formerly Physician Superintendent at Murray Royal and Murthly Hospitals, Consultant Psychiatrist and Honorary Lecturer at Dundee University

Harry Stalker died, aged 90, on 19 June 2003. He was born in Edinburgh, educated at Daniel Stewarts College and he graduated in Medicine in 1935 from Edinburgh University. He obtained a DipPsych in 1938, an MD(Commended) in 1939, FRCPE in 1943 and FRCPsych in 1972. He was elected a Commonwealth fund Fellow in 1947–48, which time he spent in the psychiatric services in New York.

He began his career in psychiatry at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital under D. K. Henderson (later Sir David) and was appointed Lecturer in Psychiatry, a position he held from 1938 to 1950, and served as Deputy Physician Superintendent from 1942 until 1950. After 2 years as a consultant at Cane Hill Hospital, Surrey, he was appointed Physician Superintendent at Murthly Hospital, Perthshire, and 10 years later, in 1962, at Murray Royal Hospital, Perth.



After suffering a severe sub-arachnoid haemorrhage, from which he made an excellent recovery, he resigned his management responsibilities, but continued as consultant until he retired in 1977.

In his formative years in psychiatry he wrote papers on 'Masquerading in Uniform' and 'Nocturnal enuresis', and the major influences in his life were D. K. Henderson and Adolf Meyer, whose views on clinical practice were incorporated into his own practice. He also strongly supported the concept of the hospital as a therapeutic community. Another significant influence was his wife, Elspeth, whom he married in 1950, and

who was very much the creator of the artistic and cultural changes they brought to the hospital community.

His career in psychiatry spanned more than 40 years – a large part being before the introduction of the NHS in 1948.

Harry was a great lover of books, and he built up a large personal library as well as an excellent medical library at the Murray Royal Hospital. In recognition of this, it was with due ceremony renamed The Stalker Library. He contributed to the publication of the first history of the hospital 1827–1927 and researched and wrote the history covering the period from 1927 to 1977.

His interests, both civic and professional, included marriage guidance, the Franco-Scottish Society, history of medicine, The Howard League, local theatre and the Probus Club. He was also a collector of art, in its many forms.

In his clinical work, he was invariably patient, tolerant and understanding. His practice was based on the twin pillars of good history-taking and detailed physical examination. He particularly enjoyed Liaison Psychiatry and psycho-somatic medicine.

He leaves his two daughters, Kirsten and Elizabeth, and a much loved grandson, Jamie.

John C. Scott

reviews

Out of the Maze

Greatley, A. with Ford, R. Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, £10.00 pb. ISBN: 1-85717-469-0

This report describes three services supported by the Working Together in London Programme, a partnership of the King's Fund, the Sainsbury Centre and the Department of Health. A chapter

discussing 'assertive outreach' suggests all three services use assertive outreach principles, but only one, the Camden and Islington Team, is an assertive outreach team as conventionally understood. The other two, the Antenna Outreach Service in Haringey, aimed at young black people, and the Lambeth Early Onset (LEO) team, exclude those with long term illnesses and interpret 'assertive outreach' rather flexibly in practice. Stretching the concept may be

useful at a time when new teams are needed to meet targets, but risks loss of meaning. A chapter discusses the role of the services in combating social exclusion, though in a later section on regeneration, the report acknowledges the way current 'punitive policies' may work counter to this intention by worsening the stigma of involvement with services. This was clearly a concern to the services themselves.