SCAL JOURNAL VOLUME 290 16 FEBRUARY 1985

BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL VOLUME 250 16 PERMUAT 1985 tributory benefits when the values are not known they may put estimated figures isso the computer, which may be used as a guide sensitive of the property o

BRIGHOUS, print one is not to be amounted as the computer in the lighble and sals for the information.

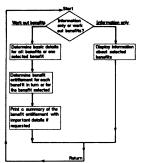
The last part of the program given brief details for quick reference about the conditions that apply to various benefits. The whole the conditions that apply to various benefits. The whole the property of the property of the property of the computer, depending mainly on the beveriey or comprehensiveness of the questions saked. In general the questions are as precise as in accessary to get the convect sawers, and an attempt has been made to make the program details. An abbreviated version of the program without the part on contributory benefit is being considered for one of the hand held computers now available. It is being rewritten in other versions of Besic to that it can run on other micro in the HPSS version of the Basic computer language. It is being rewritten in other versions of Besic to that it can run on other micro who have different computers, such as the IBM FC.

The benefit so covered by the program are given in the table, and a brief outline of the program is given in the figure. The continued of the program is given in the space, and the propriet of the program while keeping the information that has already been interiment is being tend, but if a possible to restart at different points in the program while keeping the information that has already been entered and then seeing what would happen if some of the details were different.

owance)
ness benefit
lidity benefit (invalidity pension and invalidity allowance)
trnity allowance

Furthly income supplement:
Free precurptions, dentate, optician, farea to hospital, etc.
Housing benefit (DHSS responsibility, administered by local authorities)
Non-means testifications
Non-means testification
Non-means t

Non-contributory retirement pension Age addition Statutory sick pay (an employment right, not social security) Guserdain's allowance Industrial disablement benefit, vaccine damage payment



An analysis of the last 100 cases seen by the social security officer during the past few months showed the following breadown of inquiries: attendance allowance, four; mobility allowance, six; statutory sick pay, one; sickness benefit, three; invalidity benefit, three; non-contributory invalidity pension, two; etirement peasion, two; widow's benefit, one; family income supplement, one; invalid care allowance, two; supplementary benefit: nornal and housing

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Women in General Practice

Provision for maternity leave for general practitioners

PENNY SCHOFIELD, GILL WARD

Half of the students in medical school in the United Kingdom are wo.aen. Thus issues that relate to women doctore have become of more importance and interest. The number of women who are qualified to become principals in general practice is increasing, while positions in general practice are received in the provision for material year in general practice. The number of women who are qualified to become principals in general practice are the provisions for material year in general practice. The provision of the provision for material year in general practice, thinking that the prevision for material year in general practice, thinking that the prevision for material year in great practice, thinking that the prevision for material year in great practice, thinking that the prevision when interviewed. To discuss these openly women candidates are often asked about their family intentions and commitments when interviewed. To discuss these openly women need to be well informed about materially arrangements, at the provision when the work of the provision in the interviewed. To discuss these openly women need to be well informed about materially arrangements in their order. The desired was a partner when the provision in their notes "Medical Partnership and the NHS" are not helpful in this respect.

General practitioner are classed as self employed. Women principals are therefore not covered by the Employment Protection Act 1978, which granted working women certain materially right. Women doctors who are employed in hospitals who has been employed for two years or more is entitled to 18 weeks of work at a decreasing rate of pay and 29 weeks of unpaid leave after the birth. (There are actually several problems with such a scheme for women doctors on training schemes and short contracts.)

The woman general practitioner must esquerient in drawn up, if indeed one exist. The doubts over maternity leave place a woman general practitioner at appointment in a poor negotiating position. She and her partners are aware that an en

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BMA is £280 a week.) Thus although the independent contractor status confers financial advantages on general practitioners in general, it allows women general practitioners to be disadvantaged when they become pregnant. Unlike other women workers, women principles do not have clearly defined materially rights but must negotiate from a poor position conditions that depend on the good will of their partners.

If the property of local general practitioners to find out what practising doctors knew about the current regulations, what arrangements they had, and what their attitudes were. We also sought to discover, through an advertisement in the BMJ and an article in Pulss, what experiences doctors had had.

A questionnaire was sent to all general practitioners in the Niewcastle and North Tyncaide Family Practitioner Committee area. Altogether 250 doctors (201 men, 49 women) from 95 practices were sent questionnaires with an accompanying explanatory letter. The questionnaires with an accompanying explanatory letter. The questionnaire were unlabelled, and the information remained proportionally more women than men replied but were disappointed that fewer than half of the men thought that the issue was important enough to complete the form. This questions their interest in working with women colleagues and is particularly worrying as alterations in representations of the profession of the profession at various levels. Their interest and support on issues affecting women colleagues are essential.

We wanted to know how much was known about the "red book" regulations and what proportion of practices would qualify for

requirements, 58, additional requirements, 52, single payments, 27; and housing benefit, 15.

In all of the 100 cases the answers given by the computer were correct when checked by the social security officer from the DHSS, between the computer were correct when checked by the social security officer from the CHSS, the interesting to compute advice given to a few applicants in a social security office with that given by the computer to the same applicants and described about 100 cm.

security office with that given by the computer to un summary, and described above.

Referrals have been received from the general practitioners, health visitors, and distinct nurses in the health center. There has been an average of two or three inquiries a day, a few from people who were have also given advice to patterns in their homes regarding attendance allowance, mobility allowance, and invalid care allowance without the use of the computer since they are now more aware of the existence of these allowances.

Discussion

Whether or not it is part of the function of general practitioners, community nurses, and other primary care workers to give advoce on welfare rights is perhaps open to question. A considerable proportion of the patients whom they visit regularly at home because they are too disabled to get out are entitled to attendance and mobility allowances, which they do not receive, sithough they would benefit from being more mobile. Paying these isolates and the property of the property of the property of the property of the conditions of the property of the

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clearly, in the presence of the officer, what they were or were
not entitled to, and, for example, the definition of what counts
as income was clearly stated and could be re-emphasised by
the officer if necessary.

This difference in the elastionable between the special practiculary
than the control of the property of the special practiculary
than the property of the property of the property of the property
to present the special practicular and the property of the property of the property
to present its important. It is possible to have someone
attached to the primary health care team to give advice to
patients. If such an adviser has a good relationship with the
local security office and if the computer program prints out all
the details of how the advice given is arrived at and this is
accepted by the social security office, then it should be possible
to give advice about social security benefits in complete confidence in a primary care setting and facilitate the process of
making a claim. This model is being tested with the computer
program at another health centre.

I thank the DHSS for allowing Geoff Rees and Leonard Levy to help give advice to patients and thank them for their valuable con-tributions, Peter Rice for helping to adapt the program for use with different computers, primary care workers in our health centre for making referrals, and the Gity Parcolal Foundation for financial support with purchasing computer equipment.

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1 Social Security Advisory Committee. Annual report 1881-81. London: DHSS, 1870-1871.

1 Social Security Advisory Committee. Annual report 1881-81. London: DHSS, 1870-1871.

1 History Security Security Security Security Security Security Report Institute of Security Report Institute Security Secu

100 YEARS AGO

100 YEARS AGO

Sir William Harcourt, with something of his old skill as a special pleader, is looking no opportunity of discredizing in the House of Commons the present municipal government of the metropolit. We have already been told on authority that, despetite the pleadings of Mr. Firth's Reform League, the authority that, despetite the pleadings of Mr. Firth's Reform League, the authority that, despetite the pleadings of Mr. Firth's Reform League, the distances of the pleading of the pleading that the season. Probably, therefore, it will not even be introduced, but be handed over to the one Parlament, along with a number of other matters, such as the land laws and private bill legislation, that have already been conveniently lungue just the attempts, but the Home Secretary is careful to mistenangement of metropolitian affairs; and herein he is wire. For, especially in an overgrown invertebrate organisation like London, no reform has the least chance of acceptance that is not persistently disnord into people's care as the only remoty for a state of things admittedly wateful and Harcourt even went so far, in a discussion last week on the Thames. Crossings Bill, as to express has were that the Metropolitian Board of Works did not command the condidence of London, though be citeratusously washed habands of any responsibility in the matter. Now, this is surely carrying the stands of surely expressibility in the matter. Now, this is surely carrying the cut was to be the carrying those of his recent lectures on the subject, apparently in that, until Parliament can find time to pass his Bill, Londoner must struggle on a best they carry and the the so only prepared to and, not in present administratore difficulties, instead of offering to it conusels of perfection that, feet now he late of the contract of the properties of a little consistency, the flowes Secretary might find a heloping band to London in its present administratore difficulties, instead of offering to it conusels of perfection that, feet now he late

reimbursement for a locum. Seventy six per cent of women and 56% of men were aware of the "red book" regulations. The remainder did not answer. Again we were not surprused that a higher proportion of women than men knew the regulations. It underlines the fact that to mainly affect their women colleagues of the control of the real than their practices would not qualify for locum reimbursement. This suggests that in nearly half of practices there would be no additional financial help for a woman doort who took maternity lever. A decision to do so would plee a considerable financial burden on the woman or on the pattners or lever the pattners with deditional works

Quantims 3

Stating that the family practitioner committee would partially reimburse locum cover for 13 weeks (if eligible), we asked doctors whether they thought that this was enough, too much, or too little. Sixty three per cent of the women and 45%, of the men replied that 13 weeks was inadequate, 29% of the women and 35% of the men thought it adequate, and one man thought it was too much. Over half of the general precitioners of both ease who sunwered the questionners to the steam of the great precitioners who have been done to the demands of pregnancy and motherhood. The Whiley Council allows for 18 weeks, and this is now the accepted minimum. General practice is a demanding job physically and emotionally, and we think that it is unrealistic to expect women general practitioners to return after such a short absence of 13 weeks.

We saked doctors whether they beought that the women themselves, the practice as a whole, the family practitioner committee, or a combination of all three should be responsible for financing locum cover during maternity leave. Fourteen per cent of the men and 8%, of the women thought that the partnership should be responsible, of the women thought that the partnership should be responsible, practitioner committee should be responsible and of the state of the practitioner committee should be responsible and of the remaining doctors thought that the responsibility should be borne by a combination of all three.

We wanted to know how many doctors had considered the question of maternity leave in their contracts. Few had, and this is relevant only to the women doctors who nawwered. On appointment only 11% had agreed by contract, although 34% had verbal agreements. Of others would have completed their family before taking up their appointment. It is worrying, though, that a large proportion of women have not negotisted maternity leave in their contracts.

We received 13 letters from women doctors in response to the advertisement in the BMJ and an article in Pulse, including one from a doctor's wife who was incensed by the attitude of her husband's

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newly pregnant partner, undefining that this is not just a women's issue—pregnancy affects the whole practice. Eleven women doctors told us of their experiences, and two were requests for information. It is difficult to comment at they were all very individual. Several women felt indebted to their partners for tolerating their absences and for supporting them financially. One woman's maternity leave had to be paid for in kind in partner's substitution.

Conclusion

This is the first survey of its kind, and, although the numbers were small, we believe that it is of value. Our sim it to emphasise to women who are entering general practice the need to organise their contracts appropriately when they are appointed and to encourage them to discuss openly their interest in maternity leave with prospective partners. Women must be well informed. Advice from sources such as the BMA pamphlet on partnerships in unhelpful and sexist. On applying to the BMA Personal Services for advice one woman doctor was told: "If I were a general practitioner in partnership with a woman who required time off because of pregnancy, I think I would expect her to pay the full cost of her absence." Such an attitude is unacceptable in 1984.

of beganized of the distance. Such as activide a macceptable in 1994 on 1994.

The present circumstances place burdens on men colleagues when appointing a woman partner. Clear guidelines and adequate financial support would do much to lessen their anxieties. The national regulations for employed women is now 18 weeks' minimum for maternity leave; the "red book", however, allows for 13 weeks only. The minimum demands that could be met payments to be made irrespective of practice size. Clearly, taking maternity leave without financial provision is meaninglest. Most general practitioners in the survey thought that the financial provision is meaninglest. Most general practitioners in the survey thought that the francies and the family practitioner committee, but for this to become reality the regulations must now be changed.

With more women entering general practice we see an only-boyed that the family practitioner committee, but for this to become reality the regulations must now be changed.

With more women entering general practice we an only-boyed that the family practicioner committee, but for this to become reality the regulations contribution to make to general practice and make to general practice and motherhood. Women general practicioner need support to continue practising throughout their professional lives, free from unaccessary guilt and anxiety over provision for maternity leave.

We thank our colleagues in Women in Medicine for their enthusiasm and ideas, Professor J H Walker, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, for his support and interest, and Jackie Brown and Maureen Lillie for secretarial help.

20 April 2024 by guest. Protected by copyright

(Accepted 6 December 1984)

100 YEARS AGO

The Metropolities Asylumn Board deserves, as a body, the distinct bearty thanks of Londoners for the efforts which it is making in the greated received the pred of infectious disease in our midst, and for readiness which it manifests in acting upon any suggestions calculate chanace the efficiency of in work. The neighbours of Sulliwah Wh Fullams, will doubtless not be overspred at the construction of a piet of the embearing of the work. The neighbours of Sulliwah Wh Fullams, will doubtless not be overspred at the construction of a piet of the embearing of the sullivens of the total cannot full to be of great salvantage in removal of such cases, which at persent, when they are taken to the host record of the hard cannot full to be of great salvantage in removal of such cases, which at persent, when they are taken to the host record that the managers now despatch the ambulance-teamer on its incursely at 1 p. in, instead of 6 p. m. a ilertation which will have the of considerably reducing the number of "midc cases" left in their own hos dashed to remove them it into the one that the seamer before its start on its iourney at 6 p.m. (Branth Method Journal 1885;i:610.)