was a member of the medical profession, to which he replied almost with shame that he was. She asked him why he did not write these kind of ideas in the medical journals and he threw the question back at her. She answered, "Getting into medical journals is more difficult than getting into Fort Knox."

This raised two issues that are clearly related. The first is the issue of increasing professionalisation and the second that of access to professional journals. There can be little doubt that health care is becoming more professionalised. There are whole new health care professions appearing, such as health visitors in Britain. The established professions are become increasingly specialised within themselves; expertise is secreted in smaller and smaller compartments. New colleges are flourishing. Is this increasing professionalisation good or bad? Traditionally it is a term of respect to call somebody "a real professional." Radical thought has it that professionalism is bad. The concept that a corollary to the increase in professionalisation of health care is an atrophy of the ability of both cultures and individuals to care for themselves is close to the core of Illich's argument that "modern medicine is the major threat to health in the world today."

The second issue is much easier to deal with in limited space. I scanned a *BMJ* that was to hand and all but two of the contributors who declared their profession were doctors and those two were laboratory technicians well down lists of multiple authors. Is this anything to be ashamed of? Probably most of the contributors to "Glue Sniffer" are punk rockers. Are non-medical people interested in writing for medical journals? Do they have anything useful to say? Shere Hite thinks so. Is the profession reflecting its insecurity by denying space to non-medics? Are we so superior that we think it unlikely that non-medics such as Shere Hite can tell us anything?

How to do it

Organise an international medical meeting

II: Scientific programme

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Responsibility for arranging the scientific programme should be given to one member of the organising committee, with powers to appoint his own programme subcommittee. Each member of this subcommittee must accept a specific job. The task of the scientific programme subcommittee includes preparing the programme before the meetings, administration during the meeting, and making the necessary arrangements for publication, if this is desired, after the meeting.

Preparation

The topic or topics for discussion must be determined at least 12 months before the date of the meeting, and potential participants must be notified at that time. This is part of the organisation of the whole meeting, not of the scientific programme. If there is a central theme, and the scientific programme is essentially a symposium, the scope and structure must be decided at this time, and speakers and their subjects selected. The invitation to take part should indicate the intended role of the contributor in the symposium, the duration of his talk, and the subjects covered by the speakers on either side of him. In this way, trespass, duplication, and omission are minimised. Written acceptance of the invitation to speak is essential, and its receipt must be acknowledged by the convener of the scientific committee. If translation has been arranged, you should ask invited contributors to send their full typescript to you at least one week before the meeting to allow translators the opportunity of familiarising themselves with the style, content, and terminology.

The programme of most scientific meetings allows considerable time for papers submitted by contributors on subjects of their own choosing, but usually allied to the main theme. One of the first tasks of a programme subcommittee is to send out an announcement that short papers (generally of 10 minutes' duration) will be included in the programme, and to invite members to submit or sponsor the submission of summaries. You should prepare a timetable for dealing with the summaries including the following:

(*a*)—The last date on which a summary will be accepted for consideration. To some extent this depends on the size and duration of the meeting, but there are other considerations which are dealt with below and, in general, this date should not be later than two months before the meeting.

(*b*)—Decision on how many papers can be accepted. This depends on the time available, and 15 minutes, in practice, should be allowed for a paper of about 10 minutes, so that there is time left for discussion.

(*c*)—Arrangements for the scrutiny and selection of papers. Responsibility for this may be given to a selection committee of three or four people—the smaller the better—who must report to the committee convener within two weeks. This procedure is made easier if summaries are submitted in triplicate on a standard form that is divided into three blocks. The uppermost block is for the title of the paper, the next for the contributors' names and for the place where the work has been done, and the

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lowest and largest for the summary of the intended contribution, limited to 150 or 200 words. You should already have agreed with your printer the best size for the standard form, and the estimated cost of reproducing the summaries in a booklet which can conveniently be carried at the conference (see figure).

NAME OF MEETING AND DATES

Title of abstract in capital letters
Author's designation (Prof/Dr/Mr)..........   Initials and name (underlined)..............   Name of town or city......................
The text of the abstract. This should not exceed 250 words.

Please use electric typewriter if at all possible

(*d*)—Notification of acceptance or rejection: this must be done at least two weeks before the final day for registration because nowadays university authorities unfortunately may allow expenses to a meeting for junior staff (in particular) only when a paper is being read. In an international meeting where translation is necessary it is also important to be able to give the translators a chance to look at the summaries, as these are the only indication they may receive of the content of short papers.

(*e*)—Printing and distributing programmes. The completed programme should be in the hands of all participants 10 days before the meeting, which means being in the post at least four or five days before that.

(*f*)—Reproduction of summaries. The advantage of a standard size and form of summary is that it can be cheaply reproduced by photolithography. The disadvantage is that such a book of summaries is usually too big to fit conveniently into a pocket and has to be carried in a folder. Summaries should be distributed with other written matter at the time of registration. Sending by post beforehand is unnecessarily expensive.

Recording the proceedings

The decision whether a more permanent and fuller record than the summaries is desirable must be made early in the preparations for the meeting. If it is decided to do so, a willing publisher must be sought and a contract entered into with him. The method of recording must also be decided. Broadly speaking there are two ways of doing this. The simpler, but generally less reliable, is to ask contributors to hand in their typescripts to a designated person at a designated place in the meeting hall at the time the paper is given. This designated person would probably be the selected editor of the proceedings, and contributors must understand that he has the usual editor's powers to accept, select, or reject. The second way, which is easier at the time, is to tape-record the proceedings. The advantage of this method is that it also records the discussion. The disadvantage, however, is that the spoken word always has to be extensively edited to make it readable, grammatical, and comprehensible.

If the decision is made to tape-record, it is better to give the job to a commercial firm who will make all the necessary arrangements for recording and for the first transcription. Illustrations normally have to be ruthlessly pruned, for many more are required to point a moral in a talk than to adorn the printed word. If possible, verbal agreement should be reached between editor and contributor at the time of the meeting on the minimum illustrations necessary for clarity.

Organisation during the meeting

Slides—Wrong slides, upside-down slides, out-of-order slides induce more frustration and profanity than any other feature in a meeting and can easily be avoided. One local member should be in charge of slide collection, arrangement, and onward transmission to the projectionist. A slide collection point should be at a prominent place in the foyer and be conspicuously labelled. It is best to have sufficient slide carriages available for each contributor to be given one. *In this he arranges his own slides.* The carriage is then labelled with the contributor's name and the programme number of his paper and is taken by messenger to the projectionist. In this way, all errors and omissions become the responsibility of the contributor himself. Films should be dealt with at the same collection point, labelled, and then passed to the projectionist. Precise instructions are given to the speaker as to the controls of microphone, lights, pointer, and change of slide mechanics.

Chairmen—Chairmen (moderators) of sessions will have been chosen earlier and must have been clearly briefed on their duties, the most important of which is to keep the meeting moving to time. Each chairman must know how to work the platform lights and microphones, and be able to pass the information quickly to speakers. Usually, some means of warning speakers that they are approaching the end of their time is installed. It should be as simple as possible, and preferably noiseless—at least until the final ejection stage.

Discussion—In any large meeting the voices of questioners from the body of the hall will need amplification to be audible to both the speaker and his audience. This may be included in the contract for the halls, but should be checked beforehand and arrangements made for messengers to carry the portable microphones where they are required.

What is the latest treatment for unsightly and unwanted tattoo pictures?

Many different techniques have been recommended for the removal of tattoos. The choice of technique should be influenced by the size of the tattoo, the importance of cosmetic excellence, and the personal experience of the operator. For small tattoos split-thickness tangenital excision has given good results.[1] Dermabrasion is most commonly favoured by plastic surgeons and can give results ranging from good to adequate: granules of pigment that are situated deep in the dermis may not be eliminated but at the most a faint and indecipherable shadow of the tattoo remains. During the past seven years salabrasion has been gaining in popularity. The anaesthetised tattoo is rubbed with table salt until the epidermis is removed. Judgment and experience are essential, for if the salt is allowed to remain too long on the skin there may be hypopigmentation and scarring, but if it is removed immediately the quantity of residual pigment may be unacceptable. Other techniques also have their advocates.[3] The practitioner whose patient wishes to be relieved of an embarrassing or unsightly tattoo should discuss the problems with a plastic surgeon who has compared the results obtained by the different techniques and who will advise as to which is likely to be the most effective.

[1] Wheeler, E S, and Miller, T A, *Western Journal of Medicine*, 1976, **124**, 272.
[2] Koerber, W A, and Price, N M, *Archives of Dermatology*, 1978, **114**, 886.
[3] Scutt, R W B, *British Journal of Plastic Surgery*, 1972, **25**, 189.