

MEDICAL NEWS

Disclosure of Information in Ulster

The Northern Ireland Government on 11 February under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Acts (Northern Ireland) 1922-43 issued the following new regulation: 23E. (1) It shall be the duty of every person who has reason to believe that any other person has died or received grievous bodily harm or has been wounded as the result of the discharge of any firearm or explosive device or by any offensive weapon immediately to inform a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary or a member of Her Majesty's Forces on duty of all the facts and circumstances of the case so far as they are known to him. (2) Any person who fails to comply with the requirements of this Regulation shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding £50 or to both such imprisonment and such fine. (3) In this Regulation "offensive weapon" has the meaning assigned to it by Section 8 of the Public Order (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 1970.

In a letter to the B.M.A. in Belfast the Government stated that it was "advised that the Regulation constitutes lawful authority within the terms of Section 78 of the Health Service Act (N.I.), 1948, for the disclosure of information to the Police or the Army, as appropriate, in the circumstances defined in the Regulation." (Section 78 of the 1948 Act concerns the prohibition of wrongful disclosure of information, including the disclosure of a patient's identity without consent.)

The B.M.A. was advised that the Northern Ireland Government had taken into account the special problems raised for the medical profession by the new Regulation but it considered the state of the country justified its introduction.

Higher Medical Training

The Joint Committee on Higher Medical Training (23 January, p. 241) held its first full meeting at the Royal College of Physicians of London on 18 February 1971. It was attended by the presidents of four royal colleges, representatives of the Association of Professorial Heads of Departments of Medicine and Paediatrics, and the chairmen or representatives of the 16 specialist advisory committees.

The Joint Committee was set up after a meeting held last summer at which the Royal Colleges of Physicians of Edinburgh, Ireland, and London, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, the Association of Professorial Heads of Departments of Medicine and Paediatrics, and the specialist societies were represented. Each specialist advisory committee is composed of six members, four of whom are appointed by the specialist society and two by the Joint Committee. There are specialist advisory committees for: cardiology, communicable diseases, diseases of the chest, dermatology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, geriatrics, neurology, occupational medicine, paediatrics, renal diseases, rheumatology and/or physical medicine, therapeutics and applied pharmacology, tropical diseases, and venereal diseases. A special advisory committee is concerned with general medicine.

The Joint Committee has also decided to set up a further specialist advisory committee on dermatology which would report also to the Royal College of Pathologists and the British Society of Haematology.

The specialist advisory committees will now prepare training programmes for each specialty for approval by the Joint Committee, which hopes to be able to publish them in about 12 months time. This will be the first time such programmes have been recommended by a central national body.

Mental Health Campaign

The "Mind Campaign" was launched at a press conference by the National Association for Mental Health on 16 February. The all-party manifesto released at the conference describes the aims of the campaign: to bring the size and seriousness of the problems of the mentally ill and handicapped before the public and government bodies; to galvanize into more effective action local authorities, voluntary associations in hospitals, industry, and educational centres; to raise funds to strengthen and expand the progress already made under the auspices of the N.A.M.H.; and to encourage research into prevention of mental stress.

Mr. David Ennals, M.P., called on local authorities to adjust their priorities. He stated that mental sickness was becoming a serious threat to society and that one in six girls and one in nine boys could expect to enter a mental hospital at least once in their life. Mr. David Clark, vice-chairman of N.A.M.H., laid the responsibility of this high figure at the feet of advances in technology and the noise and pressures of life in overcrowded cities.

Mr. Christopher Mayhew, M.P., chairman of N.A.M.H., said that at the moment far too much money was being wasted on prolonged stays in hospital of people with minor neuroses. These people could be helped much more by treatment within the community. At present the association had a self-supporting group of four patients with mental illness who between them had a total of 125 years' stay in hospitals. These four patients would have cost the taxpayer £3,920 per annum; under the N.A.M.H. scheme, living as a group in a home would save £2,221 per annum.

The Campaign has not set itself a financial target, but speakers at the conference emphasized that this was a long term project, in which it was hoped that local authorities would come to recognize that mental illness could be treated far more successfully—and far more cheaply—within the community than with specialized institutional treatment.

Scholarship for Medical Women

The Royal Society of Medicine invites applications for the William Gibson research scholarship for medical women from those who hold a registrable medical qualification and who are subjects of the United Kingdom or of any British colony, dominion or dependency. Valued at £200 per annum, the scholarship, to be awarded from October 1971, is normally for two years but may be extended to three years. Applications must be received by 1 August and full details are obtainable from the under secretary, R.S.M., 1 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8AE. (Tel. 01-580 2070.)

COMING EVENTS

King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.—Talk, "Medical Education and the Future of Primary Medical Care," by Dr. John Ellis, 9 March, 12.15 p.m. Fee £1 (including lunch). Applications to the Hospital Centre, 4 Nutford Place, London W1H 6AN.

SOCIETIES AND LECTURES

*For attending lectures marked * a fee is charged or a ticket is required. Applications should be made first to the institution concerned.*

Monday, 1 March

INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—4.30 p.m., Dr. W. C. Noble: Normal Skin Flora.

HUNTERIAN SOCIETY.—At Plantation House, London E.C.3, 7.30 p.m., Professor J. Crooks: Modern Trends in Thyrotoxicosis.*

ROYAL POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL.—4 p.m., Professor V. Wright: Engineering Principles Applied to Joint Disease; 6 p.m., Dr. A. Tindal: Forty-five Years Experience with the Basic Anaesthetic—Nitrous Oxide.

Tuesday, 2 March

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL COLLEGE.—5 p.m., Dr. R. E. Bonham Carter: What Happens to Ventricular Septal Defects.

Wednesday, 3 March

INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—4.30 p.m., Dr. Y. M. Clayton: Epidemiology of Fungus Infections.

INSTITUTE OF DISEASES OF THE CHEST.—5 p.m., Professor Lynne Reid: Cor Pulmonale.

INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY.—6 p.m., Dr. G. W. Ashcroft: Neurohormonal Metabolites in the Brain and C.S.F. and their Significance; 7 p.m., Dr. C. M. B. Pare: Neurohormonal Metabolism in Relation to Therapy of Psychiatric Illness.

INSTITUTE OF UROLOGY.—5 p.m., Mr. J. C. Park: Surgery of the Ureter.

MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.—At Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, 8.30 p.m., meeting with R.C.G.P.: Duodenal Ulceration.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY.—At Radcliffe Infirmary, 5 p.m., Professor J. Brod (Hanover): Functional Basis of Differential Diagnosis of Renal Disease.

ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.—5.15 p.m., Dr. F. Moran: Pulmonary Thromboembolic Disease.

ROYAL POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL.—11.45 a.m., Clinicopathological Conference by Professor J. P. Shillington: Intensive Coronary Care; 2 p.m., Dr. D. J. Weatherall: The Thalassemias.

ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY.—At medical buildings, Foresterhill, 5 p.m., Professor B. P. Marmion: Viral Hepatitis.

Thursday, 4 March

WESTMINSTER MEDICAL SCHOOL.—At Page Street lecture theatre, 5.15 p.m., Mr. C. Wastell: Surgery of Duodenal Ulcer.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE REGIONAL NEUROLOGICAL CENTRE.—At Newcastle General Hospital, 5.30 p.m., neurophysiological evening by Dr. A. J. McComas and Dr. A. R. M. Upton.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.—4.15 p.m., Erasmus Wilson Demonstration by Professor D. F. N. Harrison: Value of Whole Organ Serial Sectioning in Evaluating Natural History of Laryngeal Cancer; 5.30 p.m., otolaryngology lecture by Dr. Dorothy F. Egan: Communication Problems in Children.

Friday, 5 March

ROYAL POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL.—11 a.m., Symposium: Quality of Life after Mastectomy.

Sunday, 7 March

MEDICAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF VENEREAL DISEASES.—At Llandudno General Hospital, North Wales, Dr. Elisabeth Rees: Gonococcal Salpingitis.

CORRECTION

G.M.C. Election

In the leader on the forthcoming General Medical Council election (13 February, p. 359) it was stated that elections take place triennially. This is incorrect; they occur quinquennially.

Notice to Authors

When original articles and letters for publication are not submitted exclusively to the *British Medical Journal* this must be stated.

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