

Questions in the Commons

Increased RHA costs. The following table gives the estimated cost to regional health authorities of increased value added tax and the Clegg awards, the increased allocations to RHAs, and the gain to the Exchequer from additional VAT.

RHA	1979-80 £m			
	Estimated cost of increased VAT	Cost of Clegg awards	Increase in allocation towards extra cost	Gain to Exchequer from additional VAT
Northern	2.4-2.7	2.6	2.3	2.4-2.7
Yorkshire	2.8-3.1	2.8	2.5	2.8-3.1
Trent	3.4-3.9	3.3	3.0	3.4-3.9
East Anglia	1.4-1.6	1.3	1.1	1.4-1.6
North-west Thames	4.0-4.5	2.6	2.3	4.0-4.5
North-east Thames	3.8-4.3	3.1	2.8	3.8-4.3
South-east Thames	3.7-4.2	3.1	2.8	3.7-4.2
South-west Thames	3.0-3.3	3.0	2.6	3.0-3.3
Wessex	2.0-2.2	1.8	1.7	2.0-2.2
Oxford	1.7-1.9	1.4	1.2	1.7-1.9
South-western	2.5-2.8	2.3	2.1	2.5-2.8
West Midlands	3.9-4.4	3.7	3.3	3.9-4.4
Mersey	2.1-2.4	2.1	1.9	2.1-2.4
North-western	3.3-3.7	3.2	2.9	3.3-3.7
Total	40.0-45.0	36.0	32.6	40.0-45.0

Social Services, 22 October.

Perinatal and infant mortality, England 1978.

	Stillbirths	Live births	Deaths under one week	Deaths under one year	Infant mortality: deaths under one year per 1000 live births	Perinatal mortality: stillbirths and deaths under one week per 1000 total births
England	4797	562 630	3974	7360	13.1	15.5
<i>Region</i>						
Northern	381	38 265	297	530	13.9	17.5
Yorkshire	382	43 632	336	596	13.7	16.3
Trent	446	54 377	392	718	13.2	15.3
East Anglian	169	22 073	128	238	10.8	13.4
North-west Thames	332	43 938	290	535	12.2	14.1
North-east Thames	381	46 607	326	625	13.4	15.0
South-east Thames	353	41 958	285	557	13.3	15.1
South-west Thames	235	32 588	208	420	12.9	13.5
Wessex	214	30 875	197	380	12.3	13.2
Oxford	197	29 563	203	362	12.2	13.4
South-western	319	35 531	224	441	12.4	15.1
West Midlands	641	63 814	471	871	13.6	17.3
Mersey	273	29 931	186	363	12.1	15.2
North-western	474	49 478	431	724	14.6	18.1

Social Services, 22 October.

MEDICAL NEWS

Environmental Health

On 1 November the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust published a *Practical Guide for Medical Officers for Environmental Health*, compiled by Professor Andrew Semple and J K Johnston (£2.50). The guide is intended, says the trust, for community physicians, and especially those without previous public health experience, who are appointed as MOEHs. It covers topics such as notifiable diseases and food poisoning, port and airport health, and the control of pollution. While not intended as a textbook of environmental health, the 81-page booklet includes sources of further detailed information on all aspects of the work of an MOEH.

Parking for the disabled

The "orange badge" scheme for parking concessions for the disabled is to be tightened up in response to criticisms that it is being abused. Entitlement to the badge will be restricted to persons in receipt of mobility allowances; those aged 65 or over whose disability is as great as that of recipients of the

mobility allowance; the blind; and persons using vehicles supplied by Government departments or receiving grants towards the use of their own vehicles.

Pet Health Council

The Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry has joined with the British Veterinary Association and the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association to establish a new association, the Pet Health Council, intended to promote the welfare of pet animals by education of their owners and of the general public.

Study group on nervous diseases

Experts from 12 countries met recently at the World Health Organisation in Geneva to study disorders of the peripheral nervous system, making recommendations on prevention, treatment, and research. Infectious diseases of nerves caused by bacteria, viruses, and environmental toxins were among the subjects discussed. The study group also discussed autoimmune disorders such as the Guillain-

Barré syndrome, which is of particular concern in developing countries, as well as diabetic neuropathy and its socioeconomic implications and diseases caused by undernutrition in developing countries and malnutrition in industrialised societies.

Attacking diabetes mellitus

Diabetes mellitus is a universal health problem affecting human societies at all stages of development, with 1.0-1.5% of the world's population affected, according to the World Health Organisation's Expert Committee on Diabetes. This met in Geneva recently under the chairmanship of Professor Harry Keen. The rates are now increasing fast and will accelerate as populations age and ascertainment improves. The main health services for the diabetic should be organised at the community level, recommends the committee, preventive, curative, educational, and research activities all being based on the primary health care services. The concept of primary prevention, it says, should be vigorously explored, with particular attention paid to high-risk people and to environmental factors, including undernutrition and overnutrition.

"Crash Call"

Crash Call, a film about cardiac arrest, has been awarded a prize by the City of Strasbourg as the best educational film shown during a recent Council of Europe conference on communication techniques. Made by Southampton University's department of teaching media, the film has also been awarded a certificate by the British Life Assurance Trust and BMA Centre for Health and Education. Inquiries to Mr W J Allen, Teaching Media Department, Highfield, Southampton SO9 5NH (0703 559122 ext 785).

Information, please

Anyone who has knowledge of any non-surgical technique for removing tattoos is invited to write to Mr John M Ward, Director of Medical Records, Hotel-Dien de St Joseph, 6 Rue Arran Street, Campbellton, New Brunswick E3N 3G3, Canada.

People in the news

Dr J W Black, FRS, and Dr F Sanger, FRS, have been awarded two of the six 1979 Gairdner Foundation International Awards—Dr Black in recognition of his role in the identification of amine receptors and in the development of propranolol and cimetidine, and Dr Sanger in recognition of his development of methods for the sequencing of DNA and his contribution to new concepts of gene structure.

Correction

We much regret that in the Epidemiology article "Leptospirosis in man, British Isles, 1978" (6 October, p 872), Dr Alex Sakula's name was misspelt in the text and in the list of references.