

or black job applicants, and an update two years later showed there had been minimal change.

Last year a task force was set up by the Department of Health and the King's Fund to help health authorities to implement equal opportunities policies for all racial groups in the health service. It found that most authorities were still at the stage of considering the form their equal opportunity policies would take, and of completed policies most were "little more than statements of intent, with no possibility of successful implementation."

Because of these deficiencies the task force has produced a model policy, which has been sent to the chairmen of all regional, district, and special health authorities. It comes with a strong recommendation from Mr Tony Newton, Minister for Health, who states the government is "firmly committed to ensuring that the National Health Service should offer, and be seen to offer, genuine equality of opportunity both in its recruitment and training policies, and in the career prospects it provides. This is not only important in itself; it is also likely to contribute to achieving the parallel objective of making sure that National Health Service services properly reflect the needs of all sections of the community."

To this end Mr Newton will be chairing a seminar of health authority chairmen and general managers later this year to discuss steps to ensure that health services take account of the needs of ethnic minority communities.

A *Model Policy for Equal Opportunities in Employment in the NHS* is available from the King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF, price £1.50.

### Sniffing glue

Solvent abuse kills nearly 10 times as many under 19s as drugs do. Re-Solv, the Society for the Prevention of Solvent and Volatile Substance Abuse, is producing three videos: *Solvent Abuse—The Adolescent Epidemic?* (for community workers), *Don't Let Them Have It!* (for retailers), and *Solvent Abuse—What Parents Should Know*.

Together with Healthline Re-Solv provides a free, confidential telephone information service (Healthline tape number 92: glue sniffing and solvent abuse).

Re-Solv can be contacted at St Mary's Chambers, 19 Station Road, Stone ST15 8JP.

### Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases anniversary

The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases in Bath celebrates its 250th anniversary from March to September 1988. Events include workshops and conferences related to rheumatology, an exhibition in the Holburne of Menestrie Museum from 11 April to 17 June, and an illustrated book, *The Hospital of the Nation* will be published to coincide with the celebrations. Details from the coordinator, Rheumatology 250, Bath Institute for Rheumatic Diseases, Trim Bridge, Bath HA1 1HD, Avon, telephone 0225 335029.

### Priming the pump

The British Heart Foundation raised nearly £16m last year, 20% up on the previous year. A record sum has been allocated to research, the provision of equipment, and educational programmes—aimed at both doctors and the public. The foundation has produced a *Food Should Be*

*Fun* booklet, a newsletter on looking after your heart for all 12 and 13 year olds, and a monthly factfile for every general practitioner in Britain.

### More information in "BNF"

The next (fourteenth) edition of the *British National Formulary*, will contain new and more accurate information on pricing.

### Jaw jaw beats war war

Failures in communication—by nurses, doctors, and administrators—account for many of the complaints patients have about their treatment, according to the Ombudsman's annual report. In 1986-7 he investigated 112 grievances against doctors and found "some justification" for nearly half of them.

Although doctors' clinical judgment does not fall within his jurisdiction, the Ombudsman may consider the *conduct* of procedures set up to deal with complaints about doctors' competence. There were several of these; a prominent feature was the time taken for such procedures to reach a conclusion, presumably distressing to both sides.

Several cases suggest that senior house officers do not know that if a family practitioner requests a patient's admission then the senior house officer has no right to refuse.

*Report of the Health Service Commissioner: Annual Report for 1986-7* is available from HMSO, price £5.60.

### Recent publications

*Guidelines for occupational health services in the oil industry* (Health and Safety Commission), HMSO, price £4.50.

*Who Wants To Think About Dying and After a Death* (Cruse—the National Organisation for the Widowed and their Children), Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond TW9 1UR.

*AIDSAFACTS*—educational material on AIDS for teachers and students, Cambridge Science Books, Tracey Hall, Cockburn Street, Cambridge CB1 3NB, price £12.95.

The Council for Music in Hospitals (4 July, p 56) can be contacted at 340 Lower Road, Little Bookham, Surrey KT23 4EF, tel 0372 58264.

## COMING EVENTS

**British Medical Association**—Practice management seminar, 19 August, Brighton. Details from Carol Burnard, BMA South Thames Regional Office, Downlands House, 15 High Street, Purley, Surrey CR2 2XA. (Tel 01 660 5558.)

**University of Birmingham**—International conference "Current dilemmas in gynaecological oncology," 3-5 September, Birmingham. Details from Bel Howe Conferences (ONC), Gothic House, Barker Gate, Nottingham NH2 2JU. (Tel 0602 410679.)

**British Medical Association National Training Unit**—Seminars "Introduction to NHS finance for doctors," 4 November, and "Computer appreciation for hospital doctors," 26 November, Gatwick. Details from Carol Burnard, BMA South Thames Regional Office, Downlands House, 15 High Street, Purley, Surrey CR2 2XA. (Tel 01 660 5558.)

**Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists**—Details and copies of the programme of meetings and courses to October are available from the postgraduate education secretary of the college, 27 Sussex Place, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RG.

## SOCIETIES AND LECTURES

### Monday 27 July

INSTITUTE OF LARYNGOLOGY AND OTOLGY—5.30 pm, guest lecture at an advanced level by Mr P D Bull: Laryngeal stenosis in children.

### Shifa-ul-Mulk memorial essay competition

Clinical students at British medical schools are invited to submit entries for the 1987 Shifa-ul-Mulk memorial essay competition on the subject: "The importance of traditional values and methods in modern medicine." The sender of the best entry will receive £100, a centenary medal, and a certificate of merit.

Essays, which must be typewritten and under 1800 words, should be sent to the chairman of the Shifa-ul-Mulk Memorial Charitable Trust, 910 Garrat Lane, London SW17 0ND, by 1 October 1987.

### People in the news

Professor Tom Whitehead CBE, until recently dean of the faculty of medicine and dentistry at the University of Birmingham, has been awarded the Distinguished International Services Award by the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry. Professor Whitehead has been concerned with the improvement of laboratory performance through the application of quality control. He started the external quality assessment scheme in 1969, which was expanded into an international service in 1976.

Within the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry he was founder member and chairman of the expert panel on reference values and was director of the Thailand Project, which set the pattern for all future projects for developing countries.

### Corrections

#### Wellcome pioneering new policies to support medical research

We regret that an error occurred in this news item (27 June, p 1696). All of the figures quoted in dollars should have been in pounds, reading £50.1m, £73.3m, and £1m, respectively.

#### Tower Hamlets' health the worst in Britain?

An error occurred in this news item (13 June, p 1554), which stated that the infant mortality rate for children of Bengali mothers in 1984 was 18.1/1000; this should have read 8.1/1000.

### Wednesday 29 July

ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE—In Seminar Room, 10th Floor, Royal Free Hospital, 5 pm, guest lecture by Dr Warren B Grubb (Western Australia): The international spread of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).  
ROYAL POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL—At Stamp Lecture Theatre, 10.15 am, medical staff round.

## BMA NOTICES

### Division meeting

Members proposing to attend meetings marked \* are asked to notify in advance the honorary secretary concerned.

**Durham**—At Botanical Gardens, Durham University, Monday 27 July, 8 pm, tour of gardens. \* (Preceded by buffet at Collingwood College, 7 pm. \*)

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