PRACTICE OBSERVED

Prevention: who needs it?

NICK BLACK, I M STRONG

We begin with definitions and nel with specifications, for our topic is the possible social consequences of mass medication programmes in general and the chlorine-trioxide case in particular. There are, of course, two sets of prevention models. The 'direct' models are focused on what can be termed 'direct' beneficiaries: those whose health the intervention is intended to improve - usually the sick or dying or those with some degree of disability. The other is the 'indirect' model: one which aims to produce benefits beyond those of the immediate individual beneficiary. This may be achieved either by seeking to prevent disease in the first place or to treat illness more successfully. The benefit of doing both needs to be considered in the light of the results of the chlorine-trioxide case. There are thus two key questions. The first: who should be prevented? The second: what sort of prevention should be carried out?

Research in General Practice

Managing thyroid illness: a trainee group project

J G HOWELL, A J M BUTT

One of the objectives of a formal general practice training is to encourage research. It is hoped that the trainee will see the need to conduct research which contributes to knowledge about his patients and the way they are treated. Such a study should be relevant to the local community and of practical value in the clinic. It is also very important that the trainee learns how to present his observations and conclusions to his colleagues. It must be remembered that not all people are aware of the research methods which have been used in previous studies. This paper describes such a project.

Why we selected the project

Interest in audit in general practice has resulted in several recent studies of the management of patients with common disorders and the possibility of training the supervision of patients with thyroid disease were being discussed locally. It was decided to conduct a project based on an audit in the local practice. Dr J G Howell was a trainee in general practice at the time and was interested in the subject. The project was selected as an audit of the incidence of patients with hypothyroidism in a general practice. It was decided that the need for this project was due to the high prevalence of hypothyroidism in the practice. The project was carried out in collaboration with Dr J M Butler, the local consultant endocrinologist.

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What we did

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