PRACTICE OBSERVED

Practice Research

Death certification in general practice: review of records

D A BLACK, S J JACHUCK

Abstract

The records of death that had been certified by general practitioners in one practice over ten years were assessed in the light of the recent inter-judicial publications of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Pathologists. Over this period roughly two-thirds of the deaths in the practice were certified outside hospital and a total of 282 certifications were issued. A review of 200 certifications of death certifi-
cations showed that 12 certifications were doubtful, 4% had age and sex mis-
recordings, and 12 of the 103 certifications did not fit the criteria for reporting
outside hospital. The average age of the deceased was 76 years and almost
75% of the deceased were women. One in ten of the deceased had had a
stroke, and the most common causes of death stated in the certificates were
myocardial infarction and cerebrovascular disease. The overall accuracy of
death certification has been assessed in terms of the number of certifications
that were 'correct' in the sense that the patients lived, and the number that
were substantially wrong. The accuracy of certification can be improved
by improving the practice of death certification.

Introduction

The recent publications of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal
College of Pathologists of England on medical aspects of death certification
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British Medical Journal (1984) by both reports contains recommendations of
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Results and discussion

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A. M. A. BLACK, M. J. JACHUCK

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Interesting GPs of the Past

Archibald Cleland: c1700-71

ROGER ROLLS

Archibald Cleland was born at the beginning of the eighteenth century, on the borders of what is now modern Scotland. His family was part of the Cameron clan, and he was trained as a surgeon in Edinburgh. Cleland later moved to London, where he took on patients from all over Europe, including the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Jersey.

Medical education

Archibald began his medical career as an apprentice to a surgeon called John Erskine in Edinburgh. He then went on to study under Professor John Wilkes, who was one of the leading surgeons of the day. Cleland was known for his innovative surgical techniques, and he was one of the first to use the laparoscopic approach in surgery.

Surgery in the north

In 1723, Cleland returned to Edinburgh and opened a surgical practice. He was one of the leading surgeons of the day, and he was known for his expertise in the treatment of cancer. Cleland was also one of the first to use the new surgical techniques developed by the French surgeon, Ambroise Pare.

Archibald Cleland was known for his dedication to the practice of medicine, and he was one of the most respected surgeons of his time. His techniques were passed down to his successors, and they continue to be used today.

Diary of Urban Marcus: 1590-1600

The diary of Urban Marcus provides a glimpse into the daily life of the time. The entries are handwritten in Latin, and they cover a wide range of topics, from the weather to the politics of the day. The diary is a valuable source of information for historians, and it provides a unique perspective on the world of the time.