The Association of Course Organisers has recently published the first issue of its journal, which aims at encouraging communication and interchange of ideas among course organisers in different parts of Britain. Each issue will have a main theme (group leadership is planned for the next) and regular correspondence and news sections are planned. In addition, there will be a short report on one particular training scheme. The editor—Dr D M Dwyer, 167 North Road West, Plymouth PL1 5BZ—would welcome contributions.

The association is holding a preparatory course for potential course organisers at Cumberland Lodge in February 1986; details from Dr J Bahrami, Fieldhouse Teaching Centre, Bradford Royal Infirmary, Bradford.

Restricted car parking at BMA House

From 1 December 1985 car parking at BMA House will be restricted to designated spaces. For members of the association’s committees attending meetings at BMA House there will be a first come, first use basis for the four available spaces. If these are taken members will have to park elsewhere. The BMA estates department strongly advises committee members not to bring their cars to the building. The association regrets that members of the BMA not on committee business will not be able to park at BMA House.

Association of Palliative Care and Hospice Doctors

At a recent meeting in Birmingham attended by 90 doctors working in hospice type services both in the NHS and the independent sector, it was agreed to form an Association of Palliative Care and Hospice Doctors (of Britain and Ireland). Further information about the association and its first clinical meeting, to be held in Leeds on 7 February 1986, may be obtained from the secretary, Dr R Hillier, Countess Mountbatten House, Moorgreen Hospital, Southampton.

People in the news

Darlington Health Authority have appointed Dr Robat Williams as unit general manager for the community unit; Mr Peter Stewart as unit general manager for the acute unit; Mr Peter Stewart as unit general manager for the community unit, and Dr Jean M Bainbridge as director of planning and clinical policy.

French course for doctors

In collaboration with the French Institute the BMA is arranging another French course for doctors. The 22 week course will be held on Thursday evenings from 6 30 to 8 30 pm starting on 16 January 1986. There will be two levels of tuition. Level one will be designed for students with rusty O level French and will make use of audiovisual material with a medical bias. Level two will be aimed at those who have kept up a working knowledge of the language and will be based on the study and discussion of texts of general medical interest. BMA members and associate members will be given priority in the allocation of places, but non-members are also invited to apply. The classes will be held at the French Institute, 14 Cromwell Place, London SW7. The course fee will be £60. Registration forms may be obtained from Jane Broderick, BMA, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP (tel: 01 387 4499 ext 318).

Interactive television for clinical teaching

The way in which television was used to teach 180 clinical students in six widely separated hospitals when Charing Cross and Westminster medical schools merged was one of the main issues discussed at the third conference on the use of television in medicine. Five of the hospitals were linked by a fibreoptic cable, and the system is interactive—students can press a button to indicate that they want to respond to or ask a question. Vision mixing at a manned switching centre together with a microphone at every seat means that the dialogue may be seen and heard by the rest of the class.

It took 11 months to lay the 24 km of cables, and the backbone of the circuit runs in London Transport tunnels and the limbs run in London Electricity Board conduits. St Mary’s (Roehampton), which is the only hospital in the group that lies south of the Thames, is linked with Charing Cross (Fulham) via two microwave dishes.

Clinical students started to use the system in October 1984. A demonstration given at the conference by the head of medical illustration and teaching services at the medical school showed how successful interactive television was as a teaching medium. If the lively teaching sessions that were shown are typical, then students are clearly un-awed by the medium and lecturers have become adept at using it to address individual students. Experience suggests that lecturers are more assiduous in preparing their video sessions and that they are more likely to consider the structure of their teaching material than in traditional lectures.

An educational psychologist from Bristol University is monitoring the system for three years—until the first batch of students have completed their clinical course. He is assessing success by means of questionnaires and, by testing students in key areas of academic activity, and by measuring technical performance. An interim report based on 18 months’ experience is due soon.—JANET DAWSON, technical editor, British Heart Journal.

Corrections

Dr W G MacLean and Dr I F Casson, University of Liverpool: £6072 for a study of the glycosylation of blood cell cytoskeletal proteins in clinical diabetes.

Professor R G M Nibber, University of Sheffield: £45 623 for a study of the long term effects of protein deficiency in weanling rats on growth endocrinology and glucose tolerance.

Dr D A T New, University of Cambridge: £43 502 for a study of carbohydrate metabolism in the mammalian embryo and its surrounding tissue.

Professor R W Taylor, London Hospital: £56 310 for a study of the effects of viruses on metabolic and other functions of the islets of Langerhans.

Dr D J Ward and Dr F E Preston, Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield: £23 301 for clinical, histological, and haemotological studies in the diabetic neuropathy.

Dr T J Wilton, University of Southampton: £80 791 for a study of the clinical implications and associations of autonomic abnormalities to human insulin.

Multiple Sclerosis Society

Dr M Armstrong, Queen’s University of Belfast: £13 494 in the first instance for a study of phagocytes and antigen presentation by peripheral blood monocytes with respect to i.e. antibodies.

Professor R D Warren, University of Stirling: £38 166 for a study of mechanisms of myelin biogenesis by Schwann cells: the synthesis and assembly of proteins into the myelin sheath.

Dr M L Canner, Institute of Neurology: £26 977 for collection and processing of post-mortem brain and spinal cord for the Multiple Sclerosis Society tissue bank.

DrJ B Riney, Institute of Neurology: £14 595 for an in vivo study of Ca²⁺-activated modulators of basic protein in myelin sheaths and release of potential autacogens.