British Paediatric Association

Training in community paediatrics

A seminar on training for community paediatrics arranged by the British Paediatric Association (BPA) and the Community Paediatric Group was held in July 1987.

Dr Marion Miles spoke on the subject of accreditation. Training programmes in community child health involve supervision as well as service experience. A number of approved posts at senior clinical medical officer grade have been established and others have been approved *ad hominem*. The number of posts is rapidly increasing and more are in the pipeline.

Professor Catherine Peckham described a new MSc course in community paediatrics that will start in 1988 at the Institute of Child Health in London. This course of three terms will include epidemiology, health economics, and management as well as the more traditional areas of community paediatrics. Several similar courses are held at other centres and more are planned. These courses are designed to complement training programmes and will encourage the academic development of community paediatrics.

Dr Marion Crouchman outlined some of the difficulties facing newly appointed consultant paediatricians in community child health (CPCCH) who have often been inadequately trained for their complex managerial role and for the teaching and research aspects of their work. It is difficult to find time for administrative duties in addition to the heavy clinical workload.

Dr Simon Lenton discussed the results of a questionnaire submitted to those in training for community paediatrics. There was a wide variation in previous and current experience with most respondents having inadequate training in research, administration, and epidemiology. Estimates of the number of training posts needed to provide at least one CPCCH per district indicate the need for a large increase but the precise number will have to be

accurately assessed from the results of the BPA manpower survey.

The Nottingham community training programme was described by Dr Leon Polnay. At senior house officer level trainees worked in parallel with an experienced supervisor. A day release course over three terms covered general paediatrics, handicap, and behaviour problems, and attachments to other services dealing with children were arranged. Training continued at registrar and senior registrar level and there was an overlap between those in short term training posts and senior doctors in permanent posts.

A joint training scheme between community child health and general practice in East Lothian was described by Dr Bill Basset. The general practice component of the training programme is supervised by general practitioners with a special interest in child health and is linked to the course at the Edinburgh School of Community Paediatrics which runs for a six month period.

Training in child development and handicap was discussed by Dr David Hall. He emphasised the importance of contributions from other disciplines such as neurology, child psychiatry, psychology, audiology, ophthalmology, and education.

It was concluded that considerable progress had been made in developing training programmes and that community child health was advancing in both academic and service areas. There is a need, however, for a further increase in the number of approved training posts and for training in epidemiology and administration to be included in existing posts. The Community Paediatric group agreed to collaborate with the BPA manpower committee in producing a realistic estimate of the number of training posts required.

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