

Notice

Health Services Research

The Medical Research Council indicated to the College that they were interested in supporting high quality projects on Health Services Research (HSR) and asked the College whether there were any aspects of HSR in the field of mental health that required investigation. A useful meeting between representatives of the College and of the Council's Health Services Research Committee took place in December, 1991 following which the College agreed to make more widely known the MRC's interest in this topic. The following is a statement subsequently received from the MRC.

The Council has a long history of supporting research of direct relevance to health services, in addition to, and often built around, the biomedical and clinical research that forms the bulk of its work. This research is undertaken both in the Council's Units and through grant-supported projects. The Council wished to expand its support for HSR and set up the Health Services Research Committee (HSRC)

in 1986 to help achieve this. In 1990–91, the Council spent £4.1 M on HSR, as part of its 'Concordat' agreement with the Health Department. Examples of HSR in the field of psychiatry currently funded by the MRC include a Resource Implications Study running in parallel with the Multicentre Cognitive Function and Ageing Study and an evaluation of care management in the community for patients with chronic mental illness. However, the number of such projects is low, mainly because of the paucity of good applications. The Council therefore welcomes the opportunity, through the Royal College of Psychiatrists, to invite applications for support for HSR. The HSRC encourages potential applicants to discuss their ideas with office staff and to submit outline proposals which are normally considered by the whole Committee. If a formal application is based on a good idea but has other deficiencies, the Committee has developed mechanisms for discussing these directly with the applicants with a view to ensuring that a high quality proposal can eventually be supported. Applications are made on the standard forms according to the Council's normal regulations. It is suggested that those interested in undertaking health services research should, in the first instance, discuss their views with the HSRC Secretary, Dr A. C. Peatfield (071 636 5422, extension 6241).

Special Interest Groups

In June 1987 Council approved the establishment of 'Special Interest Groups'.

Procedure for establishing a Special Interest Group:

- (1) Any Member wishing to establish a Special Interest Group shall write to the Registrar with relevant details.
- (2) The Registrar shall forward the application to Council.
- (3) If Council approves the principal of establishing such a Special Interest Group then it will direct the Registrar to place a notice in the *Bulletin* or its equivalent, asking Members of the College to write in support of such a Group and expressing willingness to participate in its activities.
- (4) If more than 50 Members reply to this notice, then Council shall formally approve the establishment of the Special Interest Group.

- (5) The administrative support provided will be similar to that enjoyed by College Divisions. It should be noted therefore, that the College will maintain the list of members, prepare and distribute notice of meetings but will not provide staff to attend meetings, organise conferences etc.

In accordance with this procedure, Council has approved the establishment of a Private Practice in Psychiatry Special Interest Group. Members are invited to write in support of this Group and express willingness to participate in its activities. Members should write to Mrs Jean Wales at the College. If 50 members reply to this notice for the Group, then Council shall formally approve the establishment of this Special Interest Group.

Professor A. GATH
Registrar