

The Department of Transport has to consider the possible consequences of a disaster due to a driver suffering from mental illness at the wheel of a heavy goods vehicle.

The working party has found it difficult to make recommendations to the Department about the psychiatric disorders which would contra-indicate driving for this group. We also find it very difficult to strike a balance between ensuring the safety of the public without being over-restrictive and perhaps unnecessarily harsh in our recommendations. We would not wish to deprive a driver of his livelihood, if we felt there was a good chance of his complete recovery after treatment.

BRIAN WARD
Secretary,
Public Policy Committee

Information on lithium treatment

DEAR SIR,

I am gathering material for a detailed and fully documented *History of Lithium Therapy*. I have already written to many of those whose work has been of major importance in establishing lithium treatment as a major therapeutic modality in modern psychiatry, but I would be most grateful for the courtesy of your columns to make a wider appeal to your readers for information, personal reminiscences, documents, photographs, correspondence, etc., which may have historical relevance and usefulness to me in my task. Naturally, all such material will be acknowledged, handled with the greatest care, and returned unmarked in due course. All confidences will be respected.

NEIL JOHNSON
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Guidelines to staff on confidentiality

DEAR SIR,

I very much regret that Mr Leslie Rodericks feels our Guidelines on Confidentiality imply disparagement of lay staff in hospitals, (*Bulletin*, July 1980, p 109). This was certainly not intended.

Although our guidelines were written for medical records staff, medical secretaries, ward clerks and Patients' Affairs staff, the opening paragraph states a policy which in fact applies to *all* staff, medical, nursing, administrative, clerical, domestic.

The original demand for such guidelines, and the first draft, came from our Medical Services Officer who had herself been a medical secretary for many years. We discussed all of the difficulties Mr Rodericks mentions in his letter, and hoped that the production of the guidelines with its implied

policy statements would stimulate *all* staff to think about confidentiality, both seniors and juniors. Because as Chairman I felt that our records and clerical staff played such an important part in the maintenance of confidentiality, and in the production of the guidelines, I included the names of their representative members in my original letter, and had hoped that they would be published.

ZAIDA M. HALL
Records and Confidentiality Sub-Committee
Knowle Hospital
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Training in psychotherapy

DEAR SIR,

It has been suggested that the Tavistock Clinic should provide training in psychotherapy for psychiatrists who wish to go beyond an introductory level but do not seek an advanced sub-specialty training such as our current 4-year full-time Course. We are therefore thinking of arranging a course for experienced psychiatrists, post-MRCPsych, and probably for senior registrars and consultants wishing to strengthen the component of psychotherapy within their general psychiatric work. The course might involve attending one afternoon weekly for at least two years; and might consist of a reading seminar plus small supervision groups of about three members.

Before pursuing plans it is crucial to have a reliable estimate of the number of psychiatrists who might wish to join such a course. I should therefore be very grateful if any potential members would get in touch.

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Political dissenters in Russia

DEAR SIR,

On 17 November 1978, the College at its Quarterly Meeting passed unanimously a motion (which I proposed) stating in part that the College 'reiterates its concern over the abuse of psychiatry for the suppression of dissent in the Soviet Union and applauds the courage of those Soviet citizens who have taken an open stand against such abuse'. It then expressed 'its admiration and support' for Drs S. Gluzman, A. Voloshanovich and V. Moskalkov, and Mr A. Podrabinek, and 'for the brave work in Moscow of the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes'.

Since the beginning of this year the Soviet authorities have launched a severe assault on the Working Commission. Dr Voloshanovich, who emigrated in February, reported on the first stage of this at a press conference organized by the