

should the total admission rate per 100,000 be 146 for Shoreditch and 280 for adjacent Stepney; why 79 in Grimsby and 234 in Hull; why 99 in Lincolnshire A.C. and 255 in Cornwall? Why should the first admission rate of schizophrenia be 5.6 for Finsbury and 28.5 for Fulham (the total rates for the areas being both about 96); why 13.4 in Bristol and 30.2 in Stoke-on-Trent? The interpretation of these figures is beset with difficulties. We should need to take into account the regional variations in availability of mental hospital beds and out-patient facilities, in the proportion of mentally ill patients admitted to other hospitals, in policies of discharge, and so on; and these factors have already changed much since 1957.

The publication of these tables is an interesting and commendable venture. But the tables would have been easier to use if rates had also been calculated or if population figures had been given; and if there had been an index to the areas.

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Programme Development in the Mental Health Field—10th Report of Expert Committee on Mental Health. W.H.O. Technical Report Series No. 223, 1961. Pp. 55.

In 1949, when the World Health Organization was quite new, its Mental Health Section summoned an Expert Committee to advise what course its activities should take. Since then, meetings of the Expert Committee on Mental Health—whose membership changes in accordance with the theme of their deliberations—have become an annual event and some of their reports have been of lasting value. 1953, for example, was an exceptionally good year in which the Third Report in this series (W.H.O. Technical Report, Series No. 73) laid out a blueprint for the organization of the mental hospital in relation to other community mental health services, in which can be discerned many of the forward-looking proposals of our own Royal Commission and of the recent Joint Commission in the U.S.A.

The latest report in this series contains a review of the work of the World Health Organization in the field of mental health since 1949, and ends with recommendations for the future. The W.H.O. is a silent service, generous in acknowledgment of the help of its advisers but properly opposed to self-advertisement. To those who are familiar with the Mental Health Section, however, this review represents a tribute to the labours of Professor G. R. Hargreaves, first Chief of the Section, of his successor Dr. E. E. Krapf, of their very active colleague Dr. D. F. Buckle in the European Office and of their staffs in Geneva and in Copenhagen.

The Section has backed some winners—notably in John Bowlby whose maternal deprivation hypothesis was first presented to a world-wide audience in a W.H.O. monograph * and in D. D. Reid who has contributed an invaluable booklet on the application of epidemiological methods and the study of mental illness.† It has also played an important role, through its scholarships and area seminars, in spreading information about the latest advances in psychiatric practice. From the beginning, W.H.O. has stressed the close relationship between social psychiatry, public health and preventive medicine; it can claim to have been the midwife of that vigorous child, the current concept of “community care”.

On research, the record is more equivocal. There is still a tendency to suggest that “research” is spontaneously generated when eminent scientists and physicians meet and talk together; in fact, the transcripts of such encounters seldom prove enlightening. It is a different matter when people actually engaged in investigative work meet, compare results, agree on procedures and then disperse to apply themselves again to their respective studies. This is perhaps especially true in a field such as epidemiology where international comparisons are highly desirable, but can only be made after agreement has been reached on definitions and on methods of inquiry. Here W.H.O., as the natural meeting place for medical research workers from many countries, can play a valuable part; and the present report makes it plain that it intends to do so.

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* Bowlby, J. (1951), *Maternal Care and Mental Health*. W.H.O. Monograph No. 2.

† Reid, D. D. (1960), *Epidemiological Methods in the Study of Mental Disorders*. W.H.O. Public Health Papers No. 2.