

psychiatric service since 1979, the old hospital finally closing completely in 1989. Some might find it remarkable that in all the heat currently generated by protagonists and antagonists of community psychiatry, the small but significant amount of light shed by the Worcester Development Project never seems to be mentioned . . .

As one of those who is rather proud to 'have been there and done that' I feel that it is worth recording that the hospital site has finally (due to the state of the housing market) been sold to Bovis Homes. The old institution has now been completely demolished apart from the two original houses ("Bredon House" and "White Chimneys") where it all started on 11 August 1852, and a large modern housing development is under construction.

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Effectiveness and efficiency in psychiatry

SIR: We read Shanks' reconsideration of Cochrane's *Effectiveness and Efficiency* with interest and pleasure (*BJP*, November 1994, 165, 702-704). Shanks may well be correct in suggesting that psychiatry would be further down the road to knowledge-based health care if Cochrane had given us "a more decisive raspberry" when distributing awards for specialities acting with least regard to the best research evidence.

Psychiatry's response to Cochrane's challenge has been tardy but is beginning to take shape. In January 1994, at the Winter Workshop on Schizophrenia (Switzerland), the Cochrane Schizophrenia Group was formed (Cochrane Collaboration Schizophrenia Group, 1994). This now consists of an international group of reviewers, editors and an administrator. Already, as a result of methodical electronic and manual searching, a register of RCTs relevant to schizophrenia exists. In early October 1994 Dr Jair Mari (Sao Paulo, Brazil) put a systematically conducted review (family intervention for schizophrenia) into electronic form. This substantially updates a previous publication that came into print in August 1994 (Mari & Steiner, 1994). This electronic review is included in the prototype of the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. The

prototype is now being tested and refined, and will be issued in March 1995 and updated every six months from then on.

Other sub-specialities within mental health have also expressed interest and invested effort. Groups focusing on the affective disorders, child psychiatry, learning disabilities, OCD and psychological medicine are in their early stages.

Certainly compiling and disseminating the best available evidence of the effectiveness and efficiency of care is one thing and getting it into practice is another. Initiatives such as teaching students and postgraduates evidence-based practice (Evidence-Based Medicine Working Group, 1992), the Getting Research into Practice and Purchasing (GRiPP) project for clinicians and managers (Dunning *et al*, 1994), changing examination procedures to include critical appraisal of research literature (Moore, 1994), and dissemination of evidence to the 'consumers' of care (Enkin *et al*, 1994) must help.

Cochrane's challenge has set in motion even psychiatry and the speciality is making steady progress towards a more knowledge-based mental health service. Anyone interested in this project, especially those willing to invest effort, are welcome to contact either author.

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