

Foreword

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I am delighted to have been asked to contribute to the first edition of this journal.

Advances in Psychiatric Treatment is fittingly making its appearance at a time when continuing professional development (CPD) is receiving increased and deserved attention. Many of the Royal Colleges have this year launched schemes aimed at securing participation in structured programmes of CPD. We in the Department of Health are presently considering responses to the consultation paper on CPD launched at the conference I chaired on 13 June. Our objective is to develop a coherent and affordable national strategy on CPD. Other conferences on CPD have taken place or are planned. This renewed focus on CPD is highly encouraging and welcome.

Continuing professional development is one of the pillars which supports the quality of services we can offer our patients. It is becoming generally accepted that participation in CPD is a professional obligation, not an optional extra, and that clinicians must not only be committed to maintaining their

competence to practise, but should be able to demonstrate that commitment in a way that commands public confidence.

The challenge in CPD is to demonstrate that all clinicians have participated in a core curriculum and to ensure that the development of a well structured approach to CPD does not ignore the training and education needs of individual clinicians and of particular service environments. I suggest the way to meet this challenge is to promote a partnership between the interested parties: Royal Colleges, universities, postgraduate deans and regional advisers in general practice, health authorities and hospital managers. Clinicians themselves must accept personal responsibility for ensuring they are competent in the procedures which are being offered to patients.

I am sure *APT* will be of interest to all psychiatrists committed to maintaining their competence to practise. I wish Andrew Sims and his colleagues in the College's Department of CPD every success.