

shift towards care of the elderly and care of the mentally ill, the actual proportion of money has declined, though a larger proportion of residential accommodation per head of the population is retained in Scotland than in the rest of the UK.

The two books have an introduction by Lord McCluskey and the Principal Editor is Nancy Drucker, who herself visited many centres throughout Scotland in the preparation of these two volumes. Volume I contains a great deal of meat, some of which may be a little strong for weak stomachs. The book has concentrated on mental health services deliberately and of necessity has made no contributions to the care of the elderly. This is right and proper but it does beg the question as to what financial reallocation to the community services in Scotland really amounts to, given that over two-thirds of beds are occupied by people aged 65 and over.

There is also an inherent difficulty in the present broad concept of mental illness, or rather mental health, the danger being that 'least ill' people may well be the most vociferous in their demands. This would be at the expense of more disabled people less able to make the case for their care and, in the most severe instances, not even aware that they are ill.

There is talk of avoiding the stigma of being cared for in in-patient beds by the provision of alternative short-stay accommodation. A sad reflection that the naive belief still prevails that all illness is caused by institutions, therefore do away with institutions and all is well—is that right London?

Mercifully the theme throughout these books is of an integrated service including the provision of appropriate in-patient accommodation, a spectrum of available services offering facilities appropriate to the degree of disability. One almost gets carried away in believing that there might even be an element of *choice* for those with emotional or psychological problems and for those with 'old fashioned' mental illness.

There are good working models. There is a very good overview of staffing, demonstrating the wide range of availability of staff within Scottish Health Board areas. Peter Clarke's essay on joint planning is excellent; he makes a proposal for a mental health care development agency. This would be valuable if it did not become yet another quango, and it would need real teeth.

The second volume is useful. It gives a description of various services and would serve as a guide to those about to embark on new ventures, as well as stimulating others to think again of ways of improving services.

These volumes then are likely to provoke argument, much of it defensive. Throughout there is a theme of multi-disciplinary planning. There is at least an attempt to introduce some concept of consumer involvement in the determination of future services. But above all there is a refreshing awareness that mental health involves not just provision of medicines or even psychotherapy. There are essays on options, for accommodation, for activities, sheltered employment, day centres etc.

McCreadie *et al* have identified the current position in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> They have shown that where community services exist they are almost exclusively NHS and that the provision of such services is associated with a decrease in the use of long-stay beds. Sadly, local authority and alternative accommodation units are lacking. This is acknowledged by the SAMH.

The book was published to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Scottish Association for Mental Health. It would be splendid if in five or ten years' time an *evaluation* of *comprehensive* mental health services in Scotland could be the next theme.

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#### REFERENCE

<sup>1</sup>MCCREADIE, R. G., WILSON, A. O. & BURTON, L. L. (1983) The Scottish survey of new chronic in-patients. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **143**, 564–571.

**A Place of Safety: MINDS's Research into Police Referrals to the Psychiatric Services.** By Anne Rogers and Alison Faulkener. 1987. Pp 51. £2.25 (inc. postage). Obtainable from MIND Mail Order, 4th Floor, 24–32 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD.

This publication presents the findings of a retrospective study which examined the different practices involved in the implementation of Section 136 (Mental Health Act 1983) at three places of safety in London. The places studied were a police station served by a crisis intervention team, a psychiatric hospital and an emergency and assessment unit (psychiatric emergency clinic).

The media have already focused on some of the ethnic differences revealed by the study. For example, at the emergency clinic 31% of Section 136 referrals were of Afro-Caribbean origin, whilst census data showed that only 11% of the local population belonged to this ethnic group. On the surface this discrepancy might suggest racism amongst the police force, or dramatically higher rates of mental illness amongst Afro-Caribbeans. Such conclusions would be premature as some of this difference is antefactual. In the study ethnic origin is not clearly defined, but seems to be based on skin colour and racial types. However, census data classifies people by the country of origin of the head of the household. With this system black people born in England, but no longer living with their West Indian-born parents, are not classified as Afro-Caribbean. Therefore the two statistics are not directly comparable.

One of the purposes of Section 136 is to enable a social worker to carry out an assessment of the patient, and to provide any necessary arrangements for his or her care. The authors highlight the gross deficiency of social worker provision and/or involvement at two of the places of safety. Over 99% of the patients referred to both the psychiatric hospital and the emergency clinic were not assessed by a social worker. That such assessments did not take place suggests the law is being broken on a grand scale.

Following on from this point, Rogers and Faulkner show what an enormous difference social worker involvement can make to the disposal of these patients. At the police station studied, where patients were routinely assessed by a social worker, no patient was admitted to hospital under Section 136, 28% were immediately discharged and 40% were admitted informally. At the psychiatric hospital 91% of police referrals were actually admitted under Section 136, only 2% were immediately discharged and 4% were admitted informally. The case for social worker involvement becomes clear. Without it many

patients may be needlessly admitted to psychiatric hospitals.

This short book contains many other important findings and illustrates several areas where both action and further research are needed. It should be read by all professionals involved in the implementation and assessment of patients on Section 136.

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## *Forthcoming Events*

The Group-Analytic Society (London) will be holding the **S. H. Foulkes Annual Lecture 1988** at the Logan Hall, University of London Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AI on 16 May 1988 at 8.15 p.m. The speaker will be Dr Yvonne M. Agazarian, Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychology, Hahnemann Medical College, Philadelphia, USA and the topic 'The Group as a Whole'. Tickets (£4.00) available from The Institute of Group Analysis, Group-Analytic Society (London), 1 Daleham Gardens, London NW3 5BY (please enclose stamped addressed envelope).

A one day conference entitled '**Stress and Coping in the Greek Communities in Britain**' will be held in London on 17 May 1988. It will be organised by the Steering Group on this topic, co-ordinated by Dr Roland Littlewood. Further details: Dr N. Bouras, Department of Psychiatry, Guy's Hospital Medical School, London SE1 9RT

The **8th International Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Mental Deficiency** on the theme 'Key Issues in Mental Retardation' will be held in Dublin from 21–25 August 1988. Further information: Secretariat, 8th World Congress, IASSMD, 3 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 4, Ireland.

The **Second Anglo American Seminar on Alcohol & Drug Abuse** will be held at the Norfolk Resort Hotel, Brighton from 10–13 May 1988. The closing date for registration is 30 April 1988. Further information and registration forms: Nadine Swift, Conference Organiser, ESCATA Ltd, 6 Pavilion Parade, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 1RA (telephone 0273 693622).

The Newcastle Health Unit, Newcastle Health Authority, will hold a one day symposium on '**Major Tranquillisers—Effects, Efficacy, Alternatives**' on 6 May 1988 at the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne. Principal speakers: Professor Hugh Freeman and Mr Rick

Hennelley; Chairman: Professor Olson. Further details: S. Neequaye, Research and Information Officer, St Nicholas Hospital, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3XT (telephone 091 2850151/2850010).

The Forum on Sexual Medicine and Family Planning will be holding a meeting on **The Quality of Sexual Life: Review, Recent Developments and Future Directions** at the Royal Society of Medicine on 23 April 1988. Further details: Miss Barbara Komoniewska, The Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimple Street, London W1M 8AE.

The **First International Congress on Somatotherapy** will be held from 11–13 November 1988 in Paris and there is now a call for papers. Further information: Dr Richard Meyer, Chairman, AJP/L'Innovation Psychiatrique, 17 rue de Lausanne, 67000 Strasbourg, France.

A two-day conference entitled '**Depression in Schizophrenics**' will be held at the Health Sciences Centre, University of Calgary on 6 and 7 July 1988. It is sponsored by the University of Calgary Department of Psychiatry, the World Psychiatric Association Rehabilitation Group, the Alberta Psychiatric Association, and the Alberta Friends of Schizophrenics. Further information and registration: Jocelyn Lockyer, Continuing Medical Education, University of Calgary, 3330 Hospital Drive NW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 4N1.

The **12th Congress of the World Association for Social Psychiatry** will be held at the Barbican Centre, London from 6–10 November 1988. *Deadlines:* for receipt of abstracts for oral and poster presentations, 27 May 1988; for receipt of registration at the standard fee, 5 August 1988 (after this date there is an additional fee of £75); for hotel reservations, 5 August 1988. Further information and registration forms: Congress Secretariat, Conference Associates WASP, 27A Medway Street, London SW1P 2BD (telephone 01-222 9493).