

## Video news

Penpals has belatedly launched its quarterly video news and education programme, but sadly news doesn't come into it. The first half consists of a very engaging plastic surgeon giving a fireside chat about the hand, and the self-mutilating intrigues of those who seek the comfort of surgeons; the second half is a repeat showing of *Psychological Defence Mechanisms* made seven years ago. Hairstyles look a little passé, familiar faces a little younger (Andrew Powell, Tim Betts), but psychological defences appear as ageless as ever. Both good programmes in their way, but hardly news.

A quarterly video service has vast potential, and Penpals is in virgin territory. Let us hope that future programmes can find the right mix of news sheet topicality and quality features, and please, let it all be pulled together by a professional anchor man. The current in-house arrangement looks like a mug-shot from a home video, a stark contrast to the state of the art animated logo, which is almost a programme in itself.

NICHOLAS ROSE

### Tape reviews

#### Confusion and dementia in the family

The provision of accurate assessment services, suitable rehabilitation and treatment programmes, and appropriate long-term support of the confused elderly, must be largely dependent on the successful education of the professionals and carers, both formal and informal, who have dealings with them. The potential of the video to reach a wide audience should make it a particularly suitable medium. It has been most effectively exploited by those wishing to publicise the expanding problem of dementia and the relative lack of consumer friendly resources to support sufferers and their carers through their ordeal. One such is *Surviving Dementia* a recent (1988) production produced by the Church of Scotland in conjunction with Alzheimer Scotland. The stated aim is to give lay people an improved understanding of dementia while providing ideas and encouragement for those who may be able to help through involvement with voluntary projects. A lucid clinical description of the progressive symptoms of dementia is given by a consultant psychiatrist and this is interspersed with footage of sufferers' relatives and project workers in settings ranging from a sitting service, a relative support group, a day centre and residential care. This would be an excel-

lent film for showing to voluntary organisations and support groups, giving people a feeling for what it might be like to work with sufferers.

A very different and perhaps more powerful exposition of the needs of dementia sufferers and their carers is to be found in *Where's the Key?* This dramatised documentary charts the progress of an elderly woman and her caring daughter through dementia in a situation where little or no support is available. The clinical features of the illness are accurately and convincingly portrayed and equally true to life are the reactions of her relatives. Angry outbursts at her inappropriate behaviour, arguments over the sharing of care and guilt about "putting her away" produce an emotional depth to the story and one can understand something of how her daughter feels seeing her mother "like a jigsaw being pulled apart". Perhaps because of the film's age, services for the confused elderly are portrayed as virtually non-existent, and although medical advice such as "Your mother has senile dementia; there is nothing we can do, you must look after her," may still be dispensed, the video could not stand alone as a teaching device but would need to be followed by some discussion. It might be used to help medical students consolidate and discuss what they learnt about the presentation of dementia and its effect on carers.

Moving to the more medical end of the teaching spectrum are the tapes *Mental Confusion in the Elderly* and its sequel *Diagnosis and Treatment of Confusion in the Elderly* produced in 1975 by the Scottish Health Education Unit. The technical quality of the tape and changes in fashion make those 15 years seem long ago. The first title nevertheless provides an interesting "worm's eye view" of an elderly confused woman being admitted to hospital with a chest infection. The "incorrect" team are seen alternately interrogating then neglecting their patient for long periods as she is wheeled strapped to a chair from her home with only the briefest of explanations given. The end result is that inevitable dose of chlorpromazine, a treatment not required by the "model" team who attempt to use patience and reality orientation in their dealings with her. Medical students and junior admitting doctors, especially in casualty departments, will remember the important points made. Unfortunately the sequel is much less memorable, consisting of a factual lecture about the various possible medical causes of acute confusion and their treatments. A good textbook or an entertaining lecturer would be preferable ways of acquiring the information.

The last tape to be reviewed is an up-to-date (1990) and topical production from the University Department of Psychiatry in Liverpool aimed at primary health care teams faced with the prospect of *Screening the Over 75s*. A brief introductory talk about the epidemiology of mental disorder in this age group is followed by some discussion of suitable screening instruments for detecting both depression and dementia in the community. The likelihood of response to vigorous treatment in detected cases of depression is illustrated by interview with a recovered and grateful patient. The message delivered is as much about the need to treat as the need to screen and is important. The more difficult task of justifying routine screening of elderly people for cognitive impairment is also tackled. A rather despondent looking patient is seen misidentifying a picture of the Princess of Wales as Diana Dors and is subsequently deemed to have significant cognitive impairment! Presumably in times past he might have been sent to the Tower. This brief tape could be used as a focus for discussion with primary care teams or for groups of general practitioners.

IAN MCKEITH and ANDREW COLE

### The psychological aspects of HIV infection

Liaison psychiatrists likely to be involved in dealing with issues related to HIV infection could do worse than watch some of the videos sponsored by the Department of Health and available in the Nursing and AIDS series.

*Midwifery and AIDS* (1989) is a particularly timely video concerned with the implications of HIV infection for antenatal clinic attenders and midwives. This is for women with HIV infection, mental health workers and midwives and illustrates in a straightforward manner the practical and ethical problems involved in counselling women about HIV testing. Antenatal, delivery, and post-natal circumstances are dealt with, as is counselling about possible termination of pregnancy.

Another valuable video is *Psychological and Emotional Aspects of HIV Infection* (1990). The setting in this case is the medical ward for the outpatient department with emphasis on what nurses should know about HIV infection, exploration of possible constructive attitudes, the provision of comprehensive nursing and psychological care, the support of relatives and partners, referral to the specialist mental health services and support for nursing staff dealing with HIV infection. There is also a helpful covering booklet.

The videos last 20 minutes each and their length and style make them ideal for small group teaching and discussion.

PEPE CATALAN

### Tape details

| ratings                | audience            |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| *** highly recommended | P psychiatrists     |
| ** recommended         | M multidisciplinary |
| * worth looking at     | UG undergraduate    |
| o no rating            | PG postgraduate     |

#### *Penpals: Winter 1990/91. News and education video (issue 1)*

Production/ distribution: Dr Andrew Macaulay, Wexham Hospital, Slough, Berks  
 Details: Video; 40 mins; £79.80. Subscription for 4 issues  
 Rating/audience: \* P, UG, PG

#### *Surviving Dementia*

Production: Church of Scotland Video  
 Distributor: Concord, 201 Felixstowe Rd., Ipswich IP3 9BJ  
 Details: Video; 38 mins; 1988. £20  
 Rating/audience: \*\* Voluntary/lay group

#### *Where's the Key?*

Production: BBC Television  
 Distributor: Concord (hire only)  
 Details: Video; 65 mins; 1983. £15 hire  
 Rating/audience: \* UG or M

#### *Mental Confusion in the Elderly*

Production: Skyline Films/Scottish Health Education Unit  
 Distributor: Concord  
 Details: Video; 20 mins; 1975. £30 sale  
 Rating/audience: \* UG, M, PG

#### *Diagnosis and Treatment of Confusion in the Elderly*

Production: Skyline Films/Scottish Health Education Unit  
 Distributor: Concord  
 Details: Video; 20 mins; 1975. £30 sale  
 Rating/audience: o

#### *Screening the Over 75s*

Production: University Department of Psychiatry, PO Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX  
 Distributor: University Department of Psychiatry, Liverpool (sale)  
 Details: Video; 20 mins; 1990  
 Rating/audience: \* PG, P

#### *Midwifery and AIDS*

*Psychological and Emotional Aspects of HIV infection*  
 Production: Sponsored by Department of Health  
 Distributor: C.F.L. Vision, PO Box 35, Weatherby, West Yorks LS23 7EX  
 Details: Video; 2 x 20 mins; 1989/90. £35 each  
 Rating/audience: \*\* M, UG