

If I were to describe the case of the Scottish Mental Welfare Commission, what Martin does is to speculate on the effect such a body might have had in England and Wales over the past twenty years, and he concludes: ‘There would have been fewer or even no scandals. But would things have been different? Or better?’

The impact of the inquiries in England and Wales has yet to be assessed. ‘Some, including former members of inquiries, deplore the cost and anguish created by their proceedings’ (p. 251), and Martin goes on to point out that in ‘the early 1980s . . . there are still backward hospitals, poor staffing, deplorable facilities . . . and specific instances of brutality’ (p. 97).

It would be interesting to hear the views of people working in the hospitals concerned, especially in those mental handicap hospitals which experienced over 60 per cent of the total inquiries. As Martin says, ‘The real tests are yet to follow.’

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Self-damage in patients with Klinefelter’s Syndrome

Dear Sirs

I would like to describe another case with marked similarities to those reported by Professor Priest and his colleagues (Bulletin, July 1984, 8, 140) and more recently by Dr Christian and Dr Thomas (Bulletin, November 1984, 8, 218).

This patient is a 24-year-old single man, diagnosed as Klinefelter’s Syndrome. He is tall, has gynaecomastia, atrophic testes and sparse bodily hair. His IQ is in the dull-normal range. He has a history of neurotic disturbance since childhood and a personality disorder with impulsive and aggressive behaviour which has resulted in wrist slashing on several occasions and damage to hospital property. His relationships are immature and dependent. He has had several short lived psychotic episodes, mainly with auditory hallucinations.

Interestingly, he has also had episodes of urinary retention which have required repeated catheterization, although there is no obvious neurological or urological problem.

His behaviour has resulted in several prolonged admissions and he remains a management problem.

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The Walk Papers

Dr Alexander Walk, who served the College so nobly as Associate Editor of the Journal, Honorary Librarian and Past-President of the RMPA was, in addition, a man of enormous scholarship. During his lifetime he collected a veritable mountain of notes and excerpts on psychiatric history.

Dr Walk died on 22 July 1982. His widow, Mrs Peggy Walk, has generously donated the collection to the College. Not only this, but she has produced an index to the collection which in itself is a masterpiece of scholarship.

The purpose of this brief note is to bring the attention of members of the College, and indeed, other scholars, to the existence of the collection and the index which I feel sure will prove invaluable as a source of information on psychiatric history and related subjects.

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Honorary Librarian