examiner going in and out of the room during the
course of the half-hour the patient is being examined; no
physical examination is conducted during this
half-hour.

The examiners are very sensitive to the high
anxiety exhibited by candidates during the course of
the examination and there definitely appears to be a
commonality in this phenomenon for those taking
oral examinations, both in the UK as well as in the
USA.

We applaud Drs Persaud and Meux for suggesting
that we may, indeed, benefit from learning of the
perceptions and concerns of our patients regarding
the competency of the psychiatrist that we are
testing.

Stephen C. Scheiber
Gary J. Tucker
American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology
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Deerfield, Illinois 60015
USA

Molecular genetic research in
schizophrenia

Dear SIRS
Families with two or more schizophrenic members
are needed to help with MRC funded projects at
University College and Middlesex School of
Medicine. The research is attempting to detect genes
involved in manic depression and schizophrenia by
linkage methods with DNA polymorphisms. We
hope to replicate our finding of a genetic linkage in
schizophrenia on chromosome 5.

This work is highly dependent for its success on the
ascertainment of families with two or more schizo-
phrenic members. We would be very pleased to be put
in touch with any suitable families that have come to
the attention of Bulletin readers. The research requires
that a blood sample is taken from all the family mem-
bers and that they are interviewed. Informed consent
will be sought and strict confidentiality will be
maintained.

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Psychiatric consultants based in
community mental health centres

Dear SIRS
Since the mid-1980s I and many of my consultant
colleagues in Devon have been based in community
mental health centres. Previously we were based in
mental hospitals, where we spent 70% of our time
looking after hundreds of in-patients. We now spend
80% of our time in the community looking after out-
patients, and only 20% of our time in small DGH
units (where recently I was responsible for only one
in-patient, although normally there are between
eight and ten patients under my care).

From talking to consultants from other regions at
various meetings throughout the country it becomes
clear that many of them are working sessions in
community mental health centres and a much smaller,
though increasing number are actually based in com-
munity mental health centres. It is the latter which I
am interested in contacting and wonder whether you
could help me in any way to do so? I have contacted the
Association of Community Mental Health Centres
who tell me that very few doctors, let alone consult-
ants, attend their meetings. I would be very grateful
for any help you can give me.

Richard Orr
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The Laurels
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Newton Abbot,
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Building, Riding House Street, London W1N 8AA
or phone us on 071 380 9474/9475 or 071-636 8333
extension 3305 or fax 071-323 1459.

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