

News Items

Crisis Intervention in Tower Hamlets

The Crisis Intervention Service run by Tower Hamlets Social Services and the Department of Psychiatry of The London Hospital has won the *Health and Social Service Journal's* Joint Care Award for 1980-81. The Award was presented at the Institute of Directors on 25 June by Sir George Young, Minister of State for Personal Social Services.

The Crisis Intervention Service (CIS) in Tower Hamlets developed during 1976 following discussions between Dr Colin Murray Parkes of The London Hospital and Peter Mawson, Principal Area Officer for social services in Bethnal Green. Dr Parkes's work on bereavement and other psychosocial crises led him to believe that psychiatric skills should be used for prevention. Social services departments were aware that better working links could prevent some of the emergencies encountered and that joint intervention in the early stages of distress might prevent the cycle of hospital care by psychiatrists, discharge from hospital to social services care, readmission to hospital, and so on.

The CIS gathers together the services of psychiatrists, social workers and community psychiatric nurses and responds quickly to requests from any agency for help. Referrals are largely from GPs and social workers, but hospitals in the area, clergy, police, health visitors and Citizens' Advice Bureaux also use the service. Last year 110 new families were visited by the intervention team for less than half the cost of maintaining a hospital bed.

Resources of the CIS are limited (Joint Funding Grant for 1980 was £5,500), but they do allow for the employment of a central administrator, Sue Adams, who organizes the team to visit families and arranges the review sessions. The professional workers, employed either by the health authorities or the local authority, give their time (often their own) in addition to their other commitments. The CIS team reports to a psychiatric consultant (Dr Parkes) and a senior social worker at meetings to which members of the primary care team are also invited. The teams include a community psychiatric nurse, psychiatrists from the Psychiatric Department of The London Hospital and/or social workers from area teams.

As the CIS becomes more established it is being regarded as a major mental health resource. A future objective is to provide a 24-hour, seven-day week service for the whole borough. A long-term aim is for crisis intervention to form the core of a community mental health centre which will

keep individuals and families in need in the community, will break down barriers between professional disciplines and, in avoiding duplication of effort, will provide a more efficient service.

[The above news item is based on an article by Dr Gillian Waldron which appeared in *Health and Social Service Journal*, 12 June, 1981.]

Burden Research Medal and Prize

Entry for the Burden Research Medal and Prize is open to all registered medical practitioners who are working in the field of mental handicap in the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland.

The Prize consists of a gold medal and £500 and may be presented for outstanding research work which has been published, accepted for publication or presented as a paper to a learned society during the three-year period ending 31 December 1981. Five copies of the paper (or papers) with application form should be submitted by 10 January 1982 to the Secretary of the Burden Trust, 16 Orchard Street, Bristol BS1 5EA (from whom further information may be obtained).

Section of Psychiatry of The Royal Society of Medicine

Dr Kurt Schapira is to be congratulated on completing a successful term of office as President of the Section of Psychiatry of the Royal Society of Medicine. He has been succeeded by Dr G. Fraser Steele.

Historical view of psychiatric hospitals

A short history of the Old Manor Hospital in Wiltshire has been compiled by one of its former senior psychiatric social workers, Gertrude Smith. Copies are available from the Sector Administrator, The Old Manor Hospital, Salisbury, Wiltshire, at a cost (including postage) of £6.30 (hardback) and £2.20 (softback).

Mental handicap research at Stoke Park Hospital in Bristol has been documented by Dr J. Jancar, Consultant Psychiatrist and Medical Administrator at Stoke Park, in a publication which supplements the Stoke Park Studies. Enquiries for availability should be directed to Dorset Press, 23 High East Street, Dorchester DT1 1HD.