THE POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL JOURNAL

London

April 1960

INTRODUCTION

The POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL JOURNAL is to be congratulated on deciding to devote each of several numbers exclusively to articles from particular medical centres and we are proud to be asked to initiate the series. It will obviously be of interest and often of help for students, young and old, to learn something of the range and quality of the work being carried out in various medical centres. It is not easy for them to acquire this knowledge by general reading in the medical literature, which is so extensive that the undertaking would be quite impossible. In addition, it has been of great interest and very instructive for us to survey the range of work being carried out in the various departments of our own medical centre.

It has been a very difficult task indeed to select those subjects which should comprise a number of the Journal such as this one. Inevitably only a small proportion of the work which is currently being conducted can be included. It would not only be invidious, indeed it would be impossible, to choose items of current work by considerations of their possible future importance. It has not even been possible to choose subjects which would illustrate the wide range of interests which should exist in any undergraduate teaching centre.

Ten such subjects could rightly have been chosen many times over, for it is obvious that there have been many serious omissions and one has to be as grateful for the forbearance and understanding of those whose work is not represented as for the industry of those who have contributed. The pre-clinical departments are not represented at all, nor are bacteriology and chemical pathology; there is also only a smattering even from those departments which are represented. It will be obvious that these are all actively and continuously engaged in research activity, much of it of absorbing interest and much of international reputation.

Yet, extensive as this activity is, it is a mere scratch on the surface of the knowledge still hidden from us, the elucidation of which would add to our ability to prolong life and to relieve suffering. Much more should be done, more research workers should be employed, more laboratories and more apparatus should be available. All will agree that it is remarkable that medical centres in this country can contribute as much as they do when the support for medical research from public funds is relatively so small.

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The Editor is indebted to Dr. J. Vallance-Owen for his help in the preparation of this number. The contributors are members of the teaching staff of the University of Durham.