

and no time is available to contact the responsible medical officer. Definition of such emergencies and the procedures to be used would clarify the situation for all staff. Conversely, a decision to close a ward because of the particular patient population could well be made on the basis of discussion between doctors, nurses and others at a meeting.

7. Whatever the actual procedures devised by the particular hospital or by particular units of the hospital, the Committee considers it vital that such closures should be monitored, for instance by keeping a special record showing the dates, duration and reasons for each temporary locking, with the signature of each staff member who was a party to the decision. The reasons for closure should be available to all patients, and it is a matter of experience that most patients will accept such a closure when they understand the reasons for it.

The Committee wishes to make it clear that it deploras any situation in which a ward has to be closed because of lack of nursing and other staff. However, nursing certain patients does contain an element of caring for patients' safety (for instance, not making it easy for an elderly person confined at night to wander off and to come to harm) and protecting the public (in terms, for instance, of a violent patient whose treatment requires the prevention of acting out the violence). The treatment and management of such patients requires flexibility in methods including the use of a locked ward if thought to be absolutely necessary.

The fact remains, however, that the vast majority of psychiatric patients are cared for and treated in open wards, and the Committee wishes, again, to emphasize this point in order to provide a proper perspective.

EXAMINATIONS—SPRING 1980

The next MRC Psych Examinations will take place on the following dates:

Preliminary Test—Wednesday 5 March 1980

Membership Examination—

Written Papers—Wednesday 23 April 1980

Clinical and Orals—Monday 28 to Wednesday 30 April 1980.

Closing date for receipt of entries is Wednesday 6 February 1980

The entry fees are £35 and £55 respectively on each occasion. LATE ENTRIES ARE NOT ACCEPTED. The College no longer gives exemption from any part of the examinations. Candidates are reminded that they must pass the Membership Examination within five years from passing the Preliminary Test.

Details and forms are available from Examinations Secretary.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Notice to Fellows and Members

Fellows and Members are reminded of their rights under the Bye-laws and Regulations, as follows:

Bye-law XI

The President shall be elected annually from amongst the Fellows.

Regulation XI

- (1) As soon as may be practicable after the first day of January in any year the Council shall hold a nomination meeting and shall . . . nominate not less than one candidate and not more than three candidates.
- (2) Between the first day of January and the date which is

four clear weeks after the nomination meeting of the Council, written nominations, accompanied by the nominees' written consent to stand for election, may be lodged with the Registrar, provided that each such nomination is supported in writing by not less than twelve Members of the College who are not members of the Council.

- (3) An election by ballot shall be held in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations.

The nominating meeting of the Council will be held on 16 January 1980 and the last date for receiving nominations under (2) above will therefore be 14 February 1980.