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Testing Electrotherapy Equipment

MADAM – I am becoming increasingly concerned at the random usage by some members of the CSP of 'new' unproven, untested electrotherapy devices. These are glowingly recommended by salespersons as to their effects, but remarkably few scientific studies, if any, appear to be available.

How can we proceed into the 21st Century recognised by other professionals as a responsible scientifically trained body if we are unable to substantiate the treatment protocols we advocate. If the profession continues in this manner it is, I suggest, practising 'quackery'. Surely it is time for our governing body to instigate investigative procedures to explore, condone or condemn these new modalities. No drug can be marketed without extensive investigation. We are taught and know cells are 'capable of a response to weak electrical currents' (Pilla, 1981). It must be considered irresponsible to bombard tissue without any idea of the response or effects of these new machines.

Conversation with both the National Physics Laboratory and the Soft Tissue Research Unit at Guy's Hospital both reveal a staggering lack of scientific data. This, not because either department is unwilling to undertake the necessary work, but because the manufacturers of these extremely expensive machines are unwilling to pay for that work.

I wait with interest the comments of other responsible members of the Chartered Society.

Mary W Bromiley FCSP
Marlborough

Reference

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NHS Executive

Research and Development Programme

Call for outline proposals to address research priorities in the area of the primary/secondary care interface

An advisory group to the Central Research and Development Committee identified priorities for R&D on the primary/secondary care interface in 1993. The commissioning and management of this national programme has been taken forward from the R&D Directorate at North Thames Regional Health Authority and 53 projects were funded as a result of the first call for proposals in 1994. The directorate now wishes to commission work in the following areas:

- Communication across the primary/secondary care interface.
- Evaluation of guidelines for direct access to hospital based diagnostic facilities by the primary health care team.
- The information needs of patients.
- Evaluation of urban community hospitals.
- The relationship between A&E and primary care.
- Interventions directed at carers and the effect on the use of services.

In addition, expressions of interest are invited to participate in taking forward R&D on factors within primary and secondary care which affect entry to (referral, use of services) and exit from (discharge from in-patient/out-patient care) secondary care.

Please write for application forms and supporting information to Dr Janet Wisley, National PSI Programme Manager, North Thames RHA, 40 Eastbourne Terrace, Paddington, London W2 3QR.

The deadline for receipt of applications is February 6, 1996, and all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their bid in April 1996.

Action Research

Research Training Fellowships

Action Research supports basic and clinical research leading to the prevention of disability and the alleviation of physical handicap. Applications are invited for these prestigious research training Fellowships, which are intended to further the training in research techniques and methodology of young medical and non-medical graduates in the UK.

The Fellowships are awarded to train in subjects relevant to the overall objectives of the charity, including the field of bioengineering. The awards may be for up to three years but they are not intended as project grants or specifically for the purpose of higher/postgraduate education. Starting salary will be appropriate to age, qualifications and experience but will not exceed that of a first-year senior registrar. A contribution towards appropriate research expenses may be allowed to the department where the training is undertaken.

Application forms and further details are available on request (quoting ref no RTF1) from the Research Grants Officer, Action Research, Vincent House, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2DP. Closing date for completed applications is January 26, 1996.