

French psychiatry

Sir: I read the country profile on French psychiatry in the January 2006 issue with great interest as a graduate from France with post-graduate experience in a French private psychiatric clinic.

When I was an undergraduate student we had very little exposure to clinical psychiatry. It was not a compulsory posting and was never the first choice on students' 'clerkship list'. At specialisation level, most students go into psychiatry because their ranking does not allow them to opt for the more sought-after posts in medicine and surgery.

I did a 3-month posting as medical student in a large centralised psychiatric hospital. Similar hospitals in the UK have closed down since. My supervising consultant was a surgeon who had converted to psychiatry. I enjoyed her pragmatic approach.

However, I gleaned most of my experience working at postgraduate level in a private clinic. The approach was based on experience with a psychoanalytic flavour. Rarely was ICD-10 or DSM-IV quoted. This contrasts with the evidence-based British approach.

Most French psychiatrists work in private practice, and their voluntary patients are usually admitted to private clinics. The latter are in direct competition with the *hopitaux publics*, which have an in-patient population with more severe disorders.

The legacy of French psychiatry is undisputed. But with English being the language of the scientific community, the French are suffering from the paradox that the French language has narrowed the diffusion of current French psychiatry to a Francophone auditorium.

Dr Partha Gangopadhyay

St Mary's General Psychiatric Training Scheme,
London, UK, email pgangopadhyay@nhs.net

Dr Azad Cadinouche

Senior House Officer in Psychiatry, Denis Scott Unit,
Edgware Community Hospital, Burnt Oak Broadway,
Edgware HA8 0AD, UK, email haac@doctors.org.uk

College International Divisions

The executive committees of the College International Divisions are now fully functional with all officers in post as follows:

International division	Chair	Secretary	Financial officer
African	Prof. Tuviah Zabow (South Africa) Elected 24 January 2005	Dr Olufemi B. Olugbile (Nigeria) Elected 24 January 2006	Dr Frank Njenga (Kenya) Elected 19 October 2005
European	Prof. George Christodoulou (Greece) Elected 24 January 2005	Prof. Manuel Gómez-Beneyto (Spain) Elected 19 October 2005	Dr Anne Lindhardt (Denmark) Elected 19 October 2005
Middle Eastern	Dr Nasser Loza (Egypt) Elected 24 January 2005	Dr Faud Antun (Lebanon) Elected 24 January 2005	Dr Walid Sarhan (Jordan) Elected 24 January 2005
Pan-American	Dr Nigel Bark (USA) Elected 24 January 2005	Dr Oscar Meehan (Argentina) Elected 19 October 2005	Dr Simon Brooks (Canada) Elected 19 October 2005
South Asian	Prof. S. Haroon-Ahmed (Pakistan) Elected 24 January 2005	Dr Nalaka Mendis (Sri Lanka) Elected 24 January 2005	Dr Mohammad Mullick (Bangladesh) Elected 24 January 2006
Western Pacific	Prof. Scott Henderson (Australia) Elected 24 January 2005	Prof. M. Parameshvara Deva (Malaysia) Elected 24 January 2005	Prof. Helen Fung Kum Chiu (Hong Kong) Elected 19 October 2005