

The British Journal of Medical Psychology

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The British Journal of Medical Psychology is the second most profitable of the eight specialist journals of the British Psychological Society and has an international circulation of around 2,300. It is unusual in that it is the only one of the journals which is edited by a psychiatrist. While this has helped maintain valuable links between the professions of psychology and psychiatry, the BPS membership is becoming increasingly intolerant of this state of affairs. The point is often made that the Royal College would never sanction a psychologist editing one of its journals. We would like to believe that this is not true. The procedure for the selection of new editors was recently modified to make it less likely that a psychiatrist will be appointed next time. Some may regret such a development, while others may consider it only right that what may be perceived as a historical anomaly is finally to be corrected. Far fewer psychiatrists submit papers to the Journal these days than in the past. Our reasons for writing this article are to alert psychiatrists to the present circumstances and to revive the interest of psychiatrists in a journal which has served them well over many illustrious years.

The Journal began in October 1920 as *The British Journal of Psychology, Medical Section*. With the appearance of the third volume in 1923, it took on its present name but carried the appendage 'Being the Medical Section of the British Journal of Psychology', which was not dropped until 1980. In those days there were two sections to the British Psychological Society, a General section and a Medical Section, and there was a separate journal for each section. For many years, the Medical Section served the function of bringing together psychologists and psychiatrists who shared an interest in psychodynamic issues and, until 1962, the proceedings of the section's meetings were published in the Journal. During the '60s the Medical section was weakened by the formation of the Psychotherapy Section of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the exodus of many psychiatrist members. The depleted section, comprising by this time mainly psychologists, changed its name to the Medical Psychology and Psychotherapy Section. In 1988, disappointed by the Journal's diminishing interest in psychotherapy, it severed its ties with it by changing its name to the Psychotherapy Section and beginning its own Psychotherapy Newsletter. Over the years, the size and structure of the BPS has steadily expanded; it now has eleven sections and eight specialist journals.

During its 70 year history, the Journal has acquired considerable prominence, particularly for the part it has played in the development of psychoanalytic theory. In alphabetical order, some of its more notable contributors have been: Karl Abraham (1923), Alfred Adler (1924), Mary Ainsworth (1951), Michael Argyle (1974), Michael Balint (several), Don Bannister (1966), W. R. Bion (1949), John Bowlby (1956, 1957 and 1958), Cyril Burt (1923, 1926 and 1938), Alex Comfort (1977), Derek Russell Davis (several), Henry Dicks (several), Hans Eysenck (several), Ronald Fairbairn (many), Sandor Ferenczi (1928), Michael Fordham (several), Graham Foults (1973), S. H. Foulkes (several), Thomas Freeman (several), Edward Glover (several), Bob Gosling (1978), George Groddeck (1929 and 1931), H. Guntrip (several), E. Guttman & W. S. Maclay (1937), H. Hartman (1960), Denis Hill (1973), Bob Hobson (1977), W. S. Inman (several), Murray Jackson (1960 and 1976), Pierre Janet (1920, 1921 and 1924), Ernest Jones (1923, 1926 and 1929), Maxwell Jones (several), C. G. Jung (1921 and 1923), Otto Kernberg (1963), Melanie Klein (several), Gerald Klerman (1970), Malcolm Lader (1974), R. D. Laing (1957 and 1958), Aubrey Lewis (1934), Peter Lomas (several), Margaret Lowenfeld (1931), Tom Main (1957 and 1958), W. Mayer-Gross (1936), D. H. Malan (1957, 1959 and 1961), John Money (1970), Roger Money-Kyrle (several), C. Murray Parkes (1965 and 1975), I. Pilowsky (1969), John Raven (1941–43), Herbert Read (1952), Michael Rutter (1987), Joseph Sandler (several), Melitta Schmideberg (1933), Harold Searles (1959, 1961 and 1972), Robin Skynner (1974), Erwin Stengel (several), J. D. Sutherland (several), Robert Stoller (1970), Ian Suttie (1925 and 1932), Thomas Szasz (1959), Kraupl Taylor (1949, 1958 and 1981), Walter Toman (1964), Frances Tustin (1958), D. W. Winnicott (several), Heinz Wolff (1971), and Joseph Wolpe (1959).

For the first 30 years of its existence, the Journal was heavily psychoanalytical, but from the early '50s onwards, with the appointment of increasing numbers of clinical psychologists, it has needed to accommodate more psychological contributions. The pressure from this quarter eased with the introduction in 1962 of the *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* and the splitting off from this, in 1980, of the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*. Throughout the '60s and early '70s a psychoanalytic emphasis remained; but between 1975 and 1982 the

Journal was edited, for the first time, by two professors of psychiatry (A. H. Crisp and J. P. Watson) and, as a result, it became more diversified in content and included increasing proportions of empirical studies. This gradual shift in emphasis won some readers but lost others. Clinical psychologists became more interested by dynamic psychotherapists lost interest. This might have opened the way, in 1984, for the introduction of the new *British Journal of Psychotherapy*. The 1980s saw a steady growth in interest in health psychology and, because the BPS had no specialist journal for this area the term "medical" in the Journal's title took on a new significance. More and more health psychology papers were accepted until by 1990, they had taken over almost half the Journal's contents. A recent policy change by the BPS Journals Committee has now diverted most of them to a special section of the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*. Already the Journal is assuming more of its former character.

Present editorial policy needs to take account of the fact that the professions of psychiatry and clinical psychology have become progressively less clearly distinguishable from each other. Clinical psychologists have made important theoretical contributions to mental science and introduced therapeutic procedures which have been taken up by psychiatrists. Their activities have extended into areas which until recently were the exclusive domain of psychiatrists. It is acknowledged that the influence of psychoanalysis has diminished with the proliferation of new theories and methods of psychological intervention, and while remaining true to its psychoanalytic roots, the Journal now needs to expand outwards to incorpor-

ate all possible theoretical models and psychotherapeutic approaches. We would like to see the Journal's contents divided equally between psychiatric and psychological contributions and collaborative studies between psychiatrists and psychologists are presently encouraged. There are roughly equal numbers of psychiatrists and psychologists on the editorial team. An ideal arrangement would be for its management to be shared between the BPS and the College, though we appreciate that this is an unrealisable dream.

It has often been considered that the *British Journal of Psychiatry* represented the more organic end of the psychiatric spectrum and the *British Journal of Medical Psychology* the more psychodynamic end. We are aware that in recent years the *British Journal of Psychiatry* has come to adopt a more liberal policy and to encourage submissions across the entire spectrum. This we welcome, but we would maintain that the *British Journal of Medical Psychology* continues to be a specialist journal in the fields of interpersonal relationships, psychodynamics and psychotherapy and we would wish to encourage more psychiatrists with interests in these fields to read, support and contribute to it. We remain conscious of the Journal's historic function of providing a meeting point for the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry, particularly in the interpersonal domain, and recognise that, in the coming years, as the two professions draw closer together, this function will become increasingly relevant. We respect the fact that psychiatry covers a broad spectrum and, while the Journal's interests lie predominantly at the relationships end, we recognise the need for the entire range of psychiatric journals.

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A prize for the editor

Five years ago the Bruce Burns Memorial Trust was launched to commemorate the work of Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Burns, and in particular, his involvement with the promotion of mental health. At the time of his death in 1986 Dr Burns was Chairman of the West Midlands Working Party on Mental Health Promotion. The Memorial Trust's aim is to improve the mental health of people in the Region – especially former patients – by increasing awareness of the value of mental health promotion among both professional and lay people. One fruitful area has been the development of links between the arts and mental health services, encouraging the provision of more cultural opportunities for people who have had mental health problems. Projects include supporting theatre groups dealing with health issues and health

education, and having visiting 'resident' artists working in hospitals.

The Trust's work falls into several different areas. It offers financial support to individuals or groups wishing to study topics or undertake research related to the promotion of mental health. There is also an annual guest lecture (the first one in 1988 was given by Professor Andrew Sims on 'How to Stay Sane'), and an award for the best published article aimed at the general public. This year's winner was *Bulletin* editor, Greg Wilkinson, whose booklet *Depression* has been highly praised. Dr Wilkinson was given the prize by the Chairman of the Trust, Dr A. C. White, at the 1991 annual lecture 'Schizophrenia – the beginning and the end' delivered in Birmingham in October by Professor Robin Murray.