

## Conference briefing

### Liaison Psychiatry Group Conference\*

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Delegates heard a small number of addresses and then participated in a series of workshops about provision of liaison psychiatry services.

The first session dealt with somatisation. Presentations were made by Drs Benjamin, Creed, Bass and Professor Elena Garralda. Videotaped case demonstrations highlighted the difficulties of engaging somatising patients in psychiatric treatment. The varied perspectives of child and adult psychiatry in the lectures and ensuing discussions provided a stimulating start to the meeting. This cross-fertilisation of ideas remained a valuable feature of subsequent sessions.

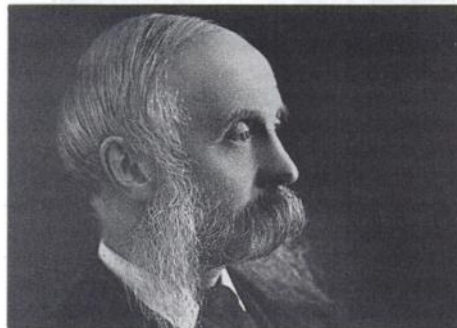
Next, a full day of workshops. These were run along the lines of the King's Fund Forum Consensus meetings. Everyone was able to participate in two of the four groups, each of which was required to report back to a panel at the end of the day, helping to focus the discussion on the development of practical solutions to the problems of service provision. The themes under consideration were staffing a liaison service; styles of working; defining workload and making the case of need for a liaison psychiatry service to other professionals.

At the end of the day, all the groups came together to feed back their conclusions to the meeting. Discussion was led by a panel including psychiatrists (Professor Mindham and Dr Mayou), a District General Manager (Dr Kennedy) and a neurologist (Professor Warlow). Once again, the keynote was the practicality of service provision and those lucky enough to have well developed and well staffed liaison psychiatry services were impressed by the standard of services provided by colleagues working with much more limited resources.

A recurring theme, however, was the impossibility of running a liaison service of any kind with less than a minimum of three sessions. In addition to running a clinical service, time would also be needed for teaching, administration and audit and it was suggested that the College should no longer allow posts with only two sessions of liaison psychiatry to be advertised.

The following morning's concluding session took the form of a series of 'update lectures' which were of a very high standard. Topics covered were: deliberate self-harm (Dr Hawton); recent developments in child and adolescent liaison psychiatry (Dr Kraemer) and depression in rheumatoid arthritis (Dr Creed). This was followed by the Guest Lecture on Biological Aspects of Somatisation by Dr Robert Kellner of the University of New Mexico.

\*Held at the University of York, 21–23 March 1991.



**Sir James Crichton-Browne (1840–1938)**  
Lord Chancellor's Visitor in Lunacy; formerly West Riding Asylum, Wakefield; President of the Medico-Psychological Association, 1878.