

also list all the things which he considers would constitute an adequate answer and propose a method of marking them. This would then be considered at a meeting of examiners who could modify it as appropriate but would finally come to agreement on the proposals. Adoption of these procedures is likely

to make essay questions more popular with candidates but unpopular with examiners. The example on p 11 illustrates the way it could be done, and I have chosen the content deliberately because it is generally considered that psycho-analysis is a subject which is difficult to define precisely.

CORRESPONDENCE

MEDICAL STAFFING OF A FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY SERVICE

DEAR SIR,

We note in *News and Notes* (June 1975, p 5) that 'Forensic psychiatry is the application of the principles of general psychiatry to that part of the population which comes into direct contact with legal processes either in criminal or in civil actions. Forensic psychiatrists are also concerned with the management of behaviour disorders in settings where management is difficult and specialized methods of treatment may be required.'

In no way do we cavil at the first sentence, but with the second we are far from happy. We are constrained to inquire in what way a forensic psychiatrist is particularly competent to deal with behaviour disorders in settings where management is difficult and to ask what are the specialized methods of treatment? If by 'settings making for management difficulty' is meant prisons and other types of correctional institutions, then it may be that the forensic psychotherapist (widely defined) will be involved; but why should such settings be construed as difficult? Such places may be easier to work in than a hospital ill-equipped to cope with personality problems. However, we are even more intrigued by the notion of specialized methods. From our experience the treatment of behaviour disorders in a prison or security mental hospital ward is by the identical techniques used in all psychiatric hospitals, using, among other methods, the concept of the therapeutic community.

We suggest that the psychiatrists involved in court work are properly termed forensic psychiatrists. Those involved primarily in treating offenders, particularly in correctional institutions, may be seen as forensic psychotherapists, but in this case the adjective qualifying the noun comes about rather through the name of the institution than from particular expertise.

It is submitted that there is a place for the notion of forensic psychiatry, but that it is important that

those calling themselves forensic psychiatrists should not make claims regarding their expertise that cannot be substantiated. There is, of course, no objection to developing 'a body of specialists . . . to run special units and out-patient clinics and to take a lead in the development of forensic psychiatry and in education and research.' Such persons running the special units and clinics may eventually evolve specialized methods, but we question whether this state has yet been reached or even approached.

ALLEN A. BARTHOLOMEW,
Consultant Psychiatrist

KERRY L. MILTE,
Senior Lecturer in Criminology

Psychiatric Clinic
HM Prison, Pentridge
Coburg, Melbourne, Victoria 3058
and
Department of Criminology
University of Melbourne, Parkville 3052
Australia

PSYCHIATRY FOR PSYCHIATRISTS

DEAR SIR,

May I take the liberty of writing to your *Journal* as the wife of a consultant psychiatrist, who has recently been through the harrowing experience Dr P. L. G. Wakeling has so accurately described, to thank him for his courageous effort to bring this dilemma into the open.

He has not just written about this problem, but has given support and invaluable help to others in this predicament.

One point I would like to add is, should the psychiatrist be too ill himself to make contact with 'a designated person' a telephone call from his wife should be considered as acceptable.

S.M.L.

It is regretted that it was not indicated that the letter from Dr Freed (*News and Notes*, November 1975, p 13) appeared in abridged form.