

News and notes

Leverhulme Trust award

The Trustees of the Leverhulme Trust have made an award to the Society for the Study of Medical Ethics of £38 950 over two years for a study of the ethics of clinical research investigations on children.

The right to live and the right to die

A residential weekend conference for medical, nursing and other students has been arranged by Cumberland Lodge from Friday 23 April to Sunday 25 April 1982.

There will be a moral philosopher in residence, and speakers will represent medicine and other disciplines.

Further details and application forms from Miss Ruth Norton, Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Great Park, Windsor, Berks.

Mental Health (Amendment) Bill

In the Government's new Bill, the Mental Health (Amendment) Bill, published in November 1981 major reforms in the law governing the detention in hospital of mentally disordered patients were proposed.

This Bill considerably strengthens the safeguards for patients detained under the Mental Health Act 1959, clarifies the

position of staff looking after them and removes some uncertainties in the law.

The White Paper entitled *Reform of Mental Health Legislation* (1) which accompanies the Bill sets out and explains the background to the main proposals, which are:

- 1) The period before detention has either to be renewed or ended is halved.
- 2) For certain groups, detention in hospital is allowed *only* if the person is thought treatable.
- 3) Access to Mental Health Review Tribunals is increased.
- 4) The position on consent is clarified.
- 5) The standards of care given to detained patients and the use of powers of detention are safeguarded through the new Mental Health Act Commission.
- 6) Guardianship powers are made to fit current good practice.
- 7) Increased opportunity for psychiatric assessment and treatment to be provided for those appearing before the courts by introducing, as resources allow, interim hospital orders and remands to hospital.

The new Bill follows five years of detailed consultation with the professions, other bodies and individuals concerned in the care of the mentally disordered.

Reference

- (1) *Reform of Mental Health Legislation*. Cmnd 8405. London: HMSO, 1981.

International congress: 14th Trans-disciplinary symposium on Philosophy and Medicine

The congress entitled 'The use of human beings in research: philosophical, medical, legal and religious considerations' will be held 5-9 September 1982 at the School of Medicine University of Tel-Aviv, Israel.

The speakers will include William Bynum, PhD, H Tristram Engelhardt, Jr, PhD, MD, Stuart Spicker, PhD, Robert Massey, MD, Arthur Caplan, PhD, Stephen Toulmin, PhD, Andre de Vries, MD, Phyllis Dalgi, PhD, Hans-Martin Sass, PhD, Corinna Delkeskamp-Hayes, PhD, Ann Fagot, PhD, MD, Amos Shapira, JD and Ilai Alon, PhD. The congress is designed critically to review the concepts and problems germane to the use of human beings in biomedical and behavioural research. The conference is co-sponsored by the Meychan Chair for the History and Philosophy of Medicine, the Ben Gurion Fund, Tel-Aviv University Faculty of Law, Israel and the Division of Humanistic Studies in Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Connecticut, Farmington, Connecticut, USA.

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and dominating womens' experience of maternity. This book makes an impassioned plea that doctors consider womens' needs and understand women as whole people, and not simply sets of reproductive organs presenting medical problems.

The book therefore makes a contribution to ideas about a holistic obstetric and gynaecological medi-

cine, and moves ethical debate about reproduction away from the more familiar theological battlefield onto a terrain of secular humanism. This terrain is mapped out by women themselves and is informed by feminism. As a humanistic ethic, feminism is still in its infancy. Hence much of the book's philosophical debate is somewhat schematic, and

lacking the depth and precision which classical traditions have built up over centuries. Nevertheless the book breaks new ground and raises an agenda of new questions which doctors can ill afford to ignore.

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