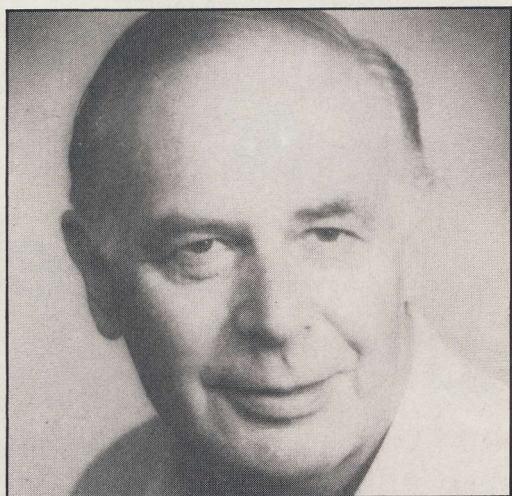


Vocational Training Column

by Dr John Smith



Vocational training scheme (VTS) for family practice

THE SA Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care is undertaking a Vocational Training Scheme at national, regional and local levels. At the national level there is a national co-ordinating director who works in consultation with the national educational committee (VTS). This committee consists of representatives from all the university departments and units of family practice/primary care.

Each region has a regional co-ordinating director who may have a deputy. They work in consultation with a regional educational committee consisting of representatives from a university department or unit of family practice/primary care, local course organisers, regional GP group of MASA, representatives of the trainers and of the trainees, and co-opted members from hospitals, the specialties and Defence Force if considered necessary. Members should, where applicable, be members of the Academy.

The regions are the following:

Northern Transvaal
Western & N. Cape
Orange Free State
(Central)

Southern Transvaal
Eastern Cape
Natal

At the local level, there will be a local course organiser (and deputy) who will be responsible for supervision of the local scheme, the trainers, the trainees and the day release course.

The scheme will cover a *minimum* two year period of which at least one year will be spent in approved hospital posts and one year in approved family practice/primary care training posts.

On completion of each period of training the trainee will obtain a written statement of 'satisfactory completion'. At the end of the VTS the Educational Committee of the Academy will issue a formal certificate, if satisfied, based on the statements attested by the trainers.

To provide for flexibility, at least in the first few years, the experience required to obtain a formal certificate can be of two kinds. 'Prescribed experience' either through a formal co-ordinated package of rotations or a self-constructed VTS in approved practice training posts. The second type of certificate will be 'equivalent experience' in non-approved posts where statements of 'satisfactory completion' are issued in retrospect to practitioners who have acquired training of value and relevance in hospital posts, locums, assistantships, overseas, Defence Force or in part-time training.

Those seeking further information should contact *The Secretary, South African Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care, Rooms 24/25, Medical House, Central Square, Pinelands, 7405 : Telephone No. (021) 538205* or a member of the Academy who will put them in contact with the National Co-ordinating Director (VTS) or a Regional Co-ordinating Director (VTS) in the region in which they reside.

The first group of trainees with Sid Mobbs, the local course organiser, and Mr Terry Edwards of Winthrop Laboratories, who have assisted substantially in the launching of the Academy's first Vocational Training Programme.



L to R (back row): Dr Sidney Mobbs, Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care, Natal; Julia Blitz and Chris Stephenson — Vocational trainees; Dr Garth Brink, Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care, Natal; Mr Terry Edwards, Marketing Manager, Winthrop Laboratories. *(Front row):* Vocational trainees — Allison Gillespie, Yumus Motala and Karin Volker.