

Health Education

Dr J.A. Smith

HEALTH EDUCATION is not just a matter of posters and pamphlets but basically of people and the key to successful health education are members of the community health team.

The private practitioner is often accused of acting like a shopkeeper in that he or she only becomes involved when the patient presents at the doorstep with a problem. So often at meetings of organisations involved with preventive and promotive health care, our colleagues are conspicuous by their absence.

One way of becoming meaningfully involved in health education is in the consultation, and Stott & Davis (1979) have presented one model:-

For each primary care consultation consider:

A	B
Management of presenting problems	Modification of help-seeking behaviour
C	D
Management of continuing problems	Opportunistic health promotion

It works in the following way: Take area A where most of our work is done. This could be when a 38-year-old woman comes with a runny nose and a cough and she gets treatment for a common cold. If one was concerned about area C one might look back into the record and find that she is a hypertensive patient, attending irregularly. If one then in addition applies area B she can be taught to use home remedies for herself and her family's common colds in future and not go to the expense of using a doctor. At the same time, one would encourage her to come regularly for anti-hypertension therapy, after trying to understand why she has been an irregular attender to date. If one then turns to area D, one might do a pap smear while she is there if she has not had one done.

Our Academy is a corporate member of the South African Association for Health Education (SANCHED) whose present chairman is Mr H Ackermann of Lay Publications (MASA) and vice-chairman Prof. G S Fehrsen of Medunsa. Why not join?

The resource centre in Medical House, Central Square, Pinelands is probably unique in Southern Africa in the variety of material that is available for your patients. Individual

membership is R10 per year and is tax deductible. Full information can be obtained from The National President, SANCHED, Medical House, Central Square, Pinelands, 7405 or by phoning (021) 53-8473, (021) 53-2982.

SANCHED's *12 Steps to Health* are given below and can be used to implement health education in the consultation.

Health Education knows no short cuts, it is ongoing and long term, but worthwhile. In this issue we begin a regular feature by Howard Botha 'the doyen of Academic Family Practice in South Africa' entitled "Só verduidelik ek - Let me explain!" We hope this will assist us in improving our expertise as teachers of our patients.

Your health is in your hands

THE most important person in relation to your health is YOU! Doctors, nurses and other health professionals are important people, but what you do with your body from early childhood is often more important to your health than anything they can do for you if things go wrong.

Good health and the prevention of illness and accidents is often not just a matter of luck. Your LIFESTYLE, your way of living, is the key to good health.

Enjoy good health by following these twelve simple, commonsense rules, one step at a time:

1. Have a good breakfast
2. Eat regular balanced meals
3. Control your mass
4. Take regular exercise within your capabilities
5. Have clean habits and clean surroundings
6. Be adequately immunised
7. Prevent accidents in the home, on the roads and at work
8. **Don't Smoke**
9. **Don't Drink and Drive**, remember alcohol can endanger your health
10. Know the signs and symptoms of ill-health which **You Should Not Ignore**
11. Get adequate sleep, rest and relaxation
12. Remember health and happiness means caring and sharing

If you have any queries or you need guidance, ask your partner in health, your family physician, or another member of your health team.