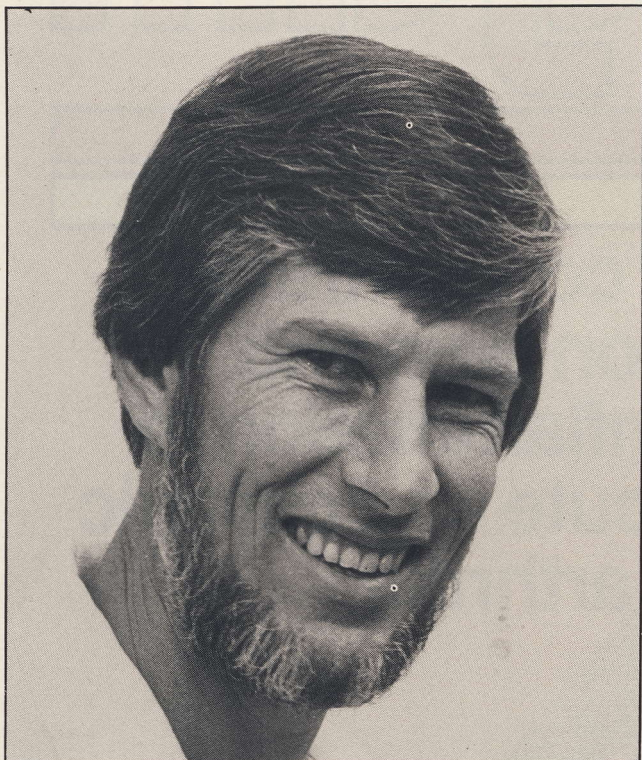


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# From the Editor

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## Common Conditions

**C**OMMON conditions and symptoms occur commonly. Most of these are managed by the patient, family or friends. At the primary care level, common conditions are also seen commonly, though at slightly different rates than in the community. Selfcare reaches its level of competence differentially. People suffering from a headache are less likely to present to a family practitioner than those who have diarrhoea for instance. Subspecialists, on the other hand, see uncommon conditions commonly. So thoracic surgeons frequently see people with lung cancer seldom seen in the experience of a family practitioner.

John Fry's book, *Common Diseases*<sup>1</sup> has now appeared in a third expanded edition. He gives us the benefit of 35 years of general practice experience: years in which he kept careful records enabling us to share in his experience of conditions seen in primary care. Our cover picture is a reminder of one of the commonest of all: the common cold. If we are not the experts in dealing with this condition, who are? To what specialist field should we look? Sir James MacKenzie<sup>2</sup> maintained that such knowledge can only be gained in general practice.

In Rakel's 3rd edition of, *Textbook of Family Practice*,<sup>3</sup> recently published, a major part of the contributions came from family practitioners.

Ons in die Suid-Afrikaanse Huisartspraktyk kan die beste bydraes lewer tot die uitbreiding van kennis van ons mense se algemene siektes en klagtes. Hiervoor is daar 'n paar vereistes: ons moet gló dat ons 'n bydrae kan maak en dat ons die beste geplaas is om dit te doen. Doelgerigte en epidemiologies-verantwoorde studies moet aangepak word. Ons moet leer om dit af te handel en te rapporteer in mediese tydskrifte. Sulke studies word alhoemeer in ons geledere gedoen. Baie word daartoe gestimuleer deur die verskillende magister-grade wat in Huisartskunde aangebied word. Andersyds koördineer die Navorsingskomitee van die SA Akademie van Huisartspraktyk/Primêresorg ook heelwat belangrike navorsing waar 'n aantal kollegas dwarsoor die land saamspan vir die doel.

Eersdaags hou ons kongres in Durban om weer by kollegas te hoor watter vordering daar gemaak is met die hantering van die probleme wat pasiënte op die Huisarts se agenda plaas. sien u daar!

#### REFERENCES:

1. Fry, John. *Common Diseases*. 3rd ed. Lancaster, MTP Press, (1983).
2. Wilson, Mc Nair R. *The Beloved Physician - Sir James MacKenzie*. London, John Murray, (1926).
3. Rakel, Robert E. Ed. *Textbook of Family Practice*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia, WB Saunders Co, (1984).