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research, audit would be perceived as anti-innovatory; it would be seen as simply providing a source of funds and structure for “bad” research or its results would be erroneously generalised. An optimistic view was that audit would reveal such wide gaps in knowledge that the importance of research would be acknowledged even by sceptics. The challenge would then be to empower practitioners with the skills and research support to fill these gaps.

Audit, like research, is much more likely to be successful within a trusting, communicative, multidisciplinary atmosphere. Furthermore, some delegates foresaw audit as an activity within a framework of health care purchasing in the context of health care improvement and not as an isolated activity. Audit is participative. On the evidence of the conference there is plenty of scope for research and development in medical audit. Time, however, is a key factor if major programmes for change, such as the national medical audit initiative, are to achieve their objectives.

Finally, the conference agreed that the consumers’ views in helping to develop, maintain, and evaluate audit have been insufficiently appreciated.

RAJ BHOPAL
Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health

RICHARD THOMPSON
Senior Lecturer and Consultant in Public Health Medicine

(For the conference organising committee, which also included Mr A Barton, Dr Ennis, and Dr C Holland)

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**DIARY**

14–15 January
Leeds: Nuffield Institute for Health Services Studies. Audit in practice (Training for audit officers: workshop No 2). A follow up workshop for those who attended the introductory workshops or who are actively engaged in medical audit to review issues and problems; to share information and ideas, particularly about audit design and outcome; and to identify action and development as necessary. (£375 residential, £350 non-residential.) Further details from Sally Sugden, Nuffield Institute for Health Services Studies, 71–75 Clarendon Road, Leeds LS2 9PL (tel 0532 459034; fax 0532 460899).

1 February
London: King’s Fund Centre. Audit and service development. A national conference to launch the King’s Fund publication on audit and service development by Charlotte Humphrey and Jane Hughes. Further details from Sue Lloyd-Evelyn, King’s Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF (tel 071 267 6111 ext 212; fax 071 267 6108).

9–11 February
Leeds: Nuffield Institute for Health Services Studies. Coming to grips with QA. A workshop for those with professional and managerial interest in, or responsibility for, quality assurance, whether as purchasers or providers, to explain quality assurance and how to develop strategies for implementing it. (£440 excluding accommodation.) Further details from Sally Sugden (see above).

January–March 1993
Leeds: Nuffield Institute for Health Services Studies. Tackling audit. A series of one day workshops for chiroprists, radiographers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, community psychiatric nurses, and psychiatric nurses which are designed for those who wish to begin conducting clinical audits of patient care or who want to increase their basic knowledge. (£300.) Further details from Sally Sugden (see above).

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**QUALITY QUOTES**

“Come give us a taste of your quality.” – SHAKESPEARE, Hamlet, II ii

“Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen” – SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1776

“Quality isn’t something you lay on top of subjects and objects like tinsel on a Christmas tree. Real quality must be the source of the subjects and objects, the cone from which the tree must start” – PIERSIG, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, 1990

“A person who sees quality and feels about it as he works is a person who cares. A person who cares about what he sees and does is a person who’s bound to have some characteristic of quality” – PIERSIG, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, 1990

“Quality isn’t a process – it’s a state of mind” – DAVID YOUNG, Managing Director, Kineticon, 1990

“Just because it came with a letter saying ‘it’s non-recurring’ doesn’t mean it’s not coming again next year. I don’t know why people find this confusing” – CIVIL SERVANT, discussing monies for medical audit

“Sweets, drinks, videos . . .”

“You know, I sometimes miss the pre-charter days”
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