

## EDITORIAL

Physiotherapist or Technician?—A physiotherapist can so easily become a technician, or can be looked upon as such by doctors from whom they receive patients or instructions relating to the treatment of their patients.

Technicians are very necessary members of certain branches of medicine, but physiotherapists are professional people, dealing directly with the sick, the injured and the handicapped. Only by keeping the standard of our work and our approach to our work and our patients at a high professional level can we demand the respect and recognition of the medical profession.

It is our responsibility to see that the results of our treatments justify the name "Physiotherapy." In our training we are taught to think for ourselves, to assess the needs of our patients and to use our initiative, and by so doing we can assist the doctor who is primarily responsible for the diagnosis and the progress of the patient. In this way we have become important members of the team.

To achieve our maximum efficiency we must keep abreast of the times, employing new techniques, discarding out-moded ideas and non-specific treatments of questionable value. We must be sure to be able to adapt our basic skills to meet new and challenging circumstances.

Physiotherapists, because of the time spent with their patients, and the necessarily close relationship which builds up between them, are able to make contact with the patient, better than anyone else in the team. It is therefore of extreme importance that we have the right psychological approach to our patients and understand how best to help them, both physically and mentally during their course of treatment. Excellent techniques can be completely worthless

if the patient is handled badly or inadequately from the psychological angle.

On the other side of the picture, do physiotherapists give any time or thought to contributing to the development of physiotherapy? By discussion on new techniques, investigation of new ideas, and how these ideas can be applied to our everyday treatments, we can stimulate interest and progress within the profession as well as amongst the doctors.

Some people are content to travel the same road year after year giving back nothing to the profession, nor do they help the younger generation to gain from their experience. It is up to all of us to make an effort to put back something of what we have taken out and to make our work of value to all.

We must avail ourselves of all knowledge open to us and try to put this knowledge into practise for the ultimate benefit of the patient. Research work in all the various branches of our profession is an all important feature in the development of physiotherapy and must be encouraged and assisted wherever possible.

A very eminent medical man overseas has given physiotherapy the great compliment of "saluting us as a Profession Complimentary to Medicine," saying that he can effect only half a cure by perfected surgical means, relying for the second half of the cure, on physiotherapy. This is a great responsibility for us, but may we by our skill initiative and efficiency and perseverance be worthy of this compliment.

It is in our own hands what we eventually become—Physiotherapist or Technician.

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