

## SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL MEDICINE

### XIII ANNUAL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 18-19, 1969

*Held in the University of Glasgow*

#### FIRST SESSION (*Chairman: T. ANDERSON*)

**An Observer Error Study of Eye Colour.** D. R. HANNAY and C. R. GILLIS (*Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, University of Glasgow*)

During a multiphasic screening survey the eye colour of 82 subjects was assessed by two observers independently, using a three-figure code with six colour categories. Colour photographs were also taken with electronic flash and similarly assessed later under standardized lighting conditions. No difference in colour vision was found on testing the two observers.

The results showed that the inter-observer error on the survey was high, as were both intra-observer errors for the two methods. In contrast, the inter-observer error for the slides was low, giving a reproducibility of 75%. There were considerable variations in frequency and agreement for the different colour categories.

**The Smoking Habits of Medical Students.** E. ROSEMARY DALTON and A. P. CURRAN (*Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, University of Glasgow*)

In October 1965, 99% of the 210 students entering first-year medicine at Glasgow University completed a questionnaire about the smoking habits of themselves and their families. Among male medical students 21% were current smokers and 58% non-smokers. The smoking habits of those students and of those entering Arts, Science, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine were not significantly different.

Early in 1969, when most had completed their first clinical term, 98% completed follow-up questionnaires. Among males, 33% were current smokers and 48% non-smokers. The smoking habits of the 68% living at home during term-time and of those living elsewhere were similar.

Opinions of change in amount smoked by 22 students, who smoked at both surveys, agreed with the actual change in 12 cases. Ten of the 22 considered that nothing had influenced their smoking habits.

**A Domiciliary Investigation of Child Development in Glasgow.** ELIZABETH WHITE (*Social Paediatric Research Group, Glasgow*)

The first part of the investigation was described. Ninety-seven children (80% of a random sample of 120) were examined at the age of 40 weeks; 70 of these were

seen again at 52 weeks and 20 at 56 weeks of age.

There were no sex differences in the developmental levels at 40 weeks but children from the lower social classes and those from the less clean homes (in all social classes) tended to be slower in language development and manipulation of small objects and books.

The average developmental level at both 40 and 52 weeks tended to be higher than that given in most of the developmental schedules in use today. A possible reason is that, in this study, the children were examined in their homes rather than in clinics.

**Blood Pressure in a Scottish Island Community.** V. M. HAWTHORNE, C. R. GILLIS, A. R. LORIMER, E. ROSEMARY DALTON and T. WALKER (*Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, University of Glasgow*)

Increased systolic and diastolic blood pressure levels in each 10-year age and sex group between the ages of 15 and 65 years were found on the island of Tiree compared to two mainland samples of the Scottish population.

Symptoms and signs of vascular disease occur on Tiree at increased levels of blood pressure when compared with the mainland. Also, mean levels of blood pressure for islanders *without* symptoms and signs of vascular disease are, in the main, higher than mean levels for mainlanders *with* symptoms and signs of vascular disease.

**Absence from Work in Relation to the Length and Distribution of Shift Hours.** J. WALKER (*Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, University of Glasgow*)

In three undertakings in which a permanent dayshift and a permanent nightshift were worked, records of absence, including sickness absence, were collected for selected samples of men. A positive association between absence and nightshift was demonstrated in two undertakings but not in the third. The results were thought to be due to the selection of shiftworkers rather than the effects of nightshift. In a further analysis, tests were made for association between total attendance, which varied greatly, and absence: the former was measured by dividing the total hours worked in a year by the number of weeks a man actually worked. There was no relation between attendance and either short- or long-term absence.