

for the field of primary medical care than the former, which seems to be more oriented towards specialization and biomedical research. In France, similar constitutional conditions have resulted in a postponement of selection to the end of the first year of medical studies which largely offers science courses, leading to uncontrollable overcrowding in this phase. Central distributing agencies were developed in the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In most countries a system of accepting students by quotas according to 'non-academic' criteria such as age, sex and previous professional experience should lead to the heterogeneity in attitude, knowledge and skills which might be most promising. An impressively diversified system of selection, based on educational and professional objectives, has been introduced at the McMaster Medical School, in Hamilton, Canada. Here, a considerable amount of thought, developmental work, training and even research appears to have contributed to overcome the highly unsatisfactory results of selecting medical students by the easy approach, namely school grades, and administrative or technological measures.

With the exception of this last model and the

broad social experiment designed in Sweden, policy of admission to medical schools seems to remain a sad and haphazard enterprise. Research in this field which is based on a useful conceptual model is almost entirely lacking. Studies like the one reviewed here should be based on existing knowledge and understanding of the structure and functions of health services, the roles and requirements of doctors and their socialization into a profession which today is being much criticized, for valid and other reasons.

H. G. PAULI
Professor and Director
Institut für Ausbildungs- und
Examensforschung, Faculty of Medicine
University of Bern, Switzerland

Note

1. *The Selection of Students for Medical Education. Report on a Working Group, Bern, 21-25 June 1971.* Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 1973.

ADDENDUM

Prospects, Vol. IX, No. 2, 1979.

On page 145, the biographical note on the author did not appear. Bernard Dumont (France) is Head of the development and structure of continuing education in the French Ministry of Education. Former Chief Technical Adviser of a Unesco-assisted project on functional literacy in Mali.