

Reports from the

Health Group

We have sold all our second printing of 'Whose Priorities?', and after some hesitation, have had a third printing done - only 500 copies this time. A letter arrived from the British Library complaining we hadn't honoured our legal obligation to give them a copy, and as a result of sending them one, Radical Statistics is now registered as a publisher with the Standard Book Numbering Agency! Those of us who were at the AGM found the discussion of 'Whose Priorities?' helpful, especially as it focussed on our concluding section which was the part we felt we had written with the most difficulty and the least success. Those of you who still haven't read 'Whose Priorities?' can open yourselves up to this literary experience by sending me 45p plus 15p for postage etc.

We hope to be able to make use of the points made in the discussion at the AGM in our two current projects. Indeed, John Puntis, one of the most vocal critics, has drafted the conclusions section for our critique of 'Sharing Resources for Health', the report of the Resources Allocation Working Party (RAWP). In this we are asking whether the Working Party were asking the right questions, whether they had answered their own questions satisfactorily (no prizes awarded for guessing our replies to these), and then going on to show any evidence we can find about the effects of the report. The drafts of the individual sections have been written and the next task is to put them together.

Our project on 'fees for service' is one stage further on, in that Tom Heller has taken the various drafts and edited them together. We will be meeting to discuss this in a few days. After some discussion at our last meeting on April 23, we decided amongst other things, to distinguish between the principles of fees for service to doctors and that of direct payment of doctors by patients. The arguments against the latter are well aired in public, though those for them are prominent in the BMA's evidence to the Royal Commission on the National Health Service. Those against 'fee for service' are less widely known, although that is how dentists are paid already. The main objections are that the practice encourages unnecessary treatments and operations, many of which have not been validated by clinical trials.

As can be seen, these two projects are well advanced. They haven't, however reached the stage when we can go through the ritual, set up at the AGM, of setting a date for a meeting to invite all and sundry to discuss final drafts for publication. It is quite likely that we shall be much nearer that stage by the time you read this. So, to save work and postage, we hereby give x (>14) days notice of $1 \leq n \leq 2$ meetings to discuss a draft of a proposed publication. To obtain a copy of the relevant draft together with details of the time and place of the meeting at which it will be discussed, please write to: Martin Bland, Dept of Clinical Epidemiology and Social Medicine, St George's Hospital Medical School, Blackshaw Rd., Tooting, London SW 17. Please tell him which draft you want, RAWP, or fees for service.

Alison Macfarlane,
40 Warwick Road,
St Albans,
Herts..

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Education Group

The education group has recently been discussing a number of particular topics and broad themes with the 'Great Debate' as background. Of particular interest has been the proposed activities of the D.E.S. Assessment of Performance Unit, and the measuring instruments in the form of item banks. We have discussed from our perspective a number of particular pieces of contemporary research and the implications of their (often) inappropriate and loaded statistical arguments.

We have thought it worthwhile to attempt to produce a pamphlet with a number of individual authors attaching specific topics from a radical statistics perspective as our contribution to the 'Great Debate'.

A number of members of the Group have ideas on particular articles but we hope to create as wide an interest as possible. Would radical statisticians with suggested topics for discussions, or with contributions to actually make to such a pamphlet, or even with tentative ideas for collaboration with others please contact Tony Fielding. Anything is welcome at this stage, and note we are concerned with education in its broadest sense, and with education at all ages.

Miscellaneous (?)

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Miscellany

Tony Fielding

Faculty of Commerce & Social
Science

University of Birmingham

P.O.Box 363

Birmingham B15 2TT



WHERE ARE ALL
THE OTHER SUB-
GROUPS??

ANYONE INTERESTED IN
FORMING A STATISTICS
AND THE LAW SUB GROUP
ROY CARR-HILL AT 193
BOULEVARD BRUNE, PARIS,
75015, FRANCE.

Sub Groups