

# HEALTH GROUP

It was decided at the meeting held on June 22 to discuss our 'fee for service' project, to go ahead and produce the final draft, which had been edited by Klim McPherson as a pamphlet. The title will be 'In defence of the NHS'. We have been given a grant by the Science and Society trust towards the costs of typesetting and having the layout done professionally. Our enquiry to NUPE about financial help met with a friendly reply and we are awaiting a decision by them. The costs will be greater this time as the pamphlet will be longer this time and we are having 2000 printed straight away in the fond hope that we sell them all and this will thus be cheaper in the long run

We have fixed September 1 as our publication date; \*this is the day that our case is due to be presented at the British Association meeting at Aston University by Tom Heller and Klim McPherson. We hope that as many others in the group will go as possible, so we can make our presence felt by asking questions and selling the pamphlet.

Our critique of 'Sharing resources for health' is in a less well advanced state. Instead of holding a meeting to discuss the latest draft, David Jones asked for comments by post and is now editing these into what we hope will be the final draft. The date of the meeting to discuss this has yet to be fixed, but this will probably have been done by the time you are reading this. For details please contact David Jones at 18 Gloucester Gardens, Sutton Surrey.

The Socialist Medical Association Pharmacy group invited us to a meeting to discuss cooperating with them. A number of interesting suggestions came up, and a letter from their secretary, Avril Butler is reproduced in this newsletter. Some of the problems they mentioned were ones which people in the health group have experience of, such as clinical trials, but for others we would like to hear from other people in Radical Statistics. Two particular ones came up in the context of their proposed work on advertisements of drugs for 'self medication'. These were how to find out the costs of advertising these and how to analyse the content of the advertisements. If anyone has any experience of this, and would like to share it, please contact me.

One of the recurrent and non-quantifiable problems in our various discussions, is the apparent conflict between the interests of patients and those of workers in the NHS. For example, in attacking certain types of high technology medicine which appear to be of no benefit, and may even be harmful, we are also attacking people's jobs. We had already identified this as being a question for internal discussion rather than on which Radical Statistics had anything to say to others. We are glad to see that BSSRS are taking this up, and have invited us to join with others in discussing it in the next but one issue of their magazine 'Science for People' which will be on health with this particular question in mind.

We are likely to hold a full day meeting some time early in the autumn to assess where we have got to so far, and how we want to carry on. If anyone not on the Health group list wants to be informed of this please let me know.

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\*The pamphlet will be available from: Radstats Health Group, c/o BSSRS,  
9 Poland Street,  
The price is 50p + 15p postage.