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*Answer Book*

The Radical Statistics Group is a group of individuals based on the distribution of this newsletter. The small amount of central administration work is done by a committee known as the "Troika", and elected at the Annual General Meeting. The editorship of this newsletter rotates; the next editor will be Roy Carr-Hill who can be contacted via the address and telephone number given below. Apart from producing this newsletter, the work of the RSG is done by its sub-groups whose membership is open to all interested parties. Please consult the contact people below if you wish to get involved. Use the newsletter to advertise if you wish to start a new group

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This problem is in fact Statistics, pure and simple. For statistics is the study of populations. Its origin and true meaning is the study of human populations. Essentially the study of the methods by which societies could be structured is the proper study of the subject of STATISTICS.

What, however, is the real message I am trying to convey? For the Radical Statistician to put across a message, that some particular set of figures really indicates that certain improvements and changes should be made, requires time and perseverance and, somehow, the selling of the statistics.

It can so often involve the rejection of the ideas, at least in the beginning, because the people taking the decisions cannot find their way through the sheer complexity of the figures before them, for they are not statisticians. They find it much easier to jump to conclusions and operate with 'seat of the pants' actions and 'gut' reactions. We must find a way to make the true, multi-dimensional figures easier to understand by Mr and Mrs Average. Text, tables and detailed arguments are difficult for most people to follow easily. Pictures, in colour and moving increase the speed of assimilation of ideas by a six-fold factor. How can we progress to making Radical Statistics vivid and alive for the majority?

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## **RATIONING HEALTH CARE: CARELESS TALK COSTS LIVES**

A Conference for all concerned with the provision of health care, organised by the Radical Statistics Health Group and The Public Health Alliance.

Saturday 14 November 1992, 10.30-4.30, at the YWCA, Great Russell Street, London WC1.

This conference will explore some of the myths and ethical issues surrounding the concept of rationing health care: Is there an infinite demand for health care? Does rationing promote 'health gain'? Can a balance be found between acute and continuing care? What lessons are there to be learned from local authority experiences of rationing? Will the public and the patient/user have a say? Who decides what and who should be rationed?

The new, 'reformed' NHS, with its purchase/provider culture, needs to address these issues. As money becomes tighter and 'The Health of the Nation' strategy requires greater progress in health promotion, the question of how to allocate health resources is more urgent than ever.

Speakers include Mark Williams, David Hunter, John Stewart, Len Doyal and Anna Coote.

Fees: £30 for those funded by their organisations, £15 for self-funding individuals. There will also be a few free places. Details and booking forms from:

The Public Health Alliance  
Room 204, Snow Hill House  
10-15 Livery Street  
Birmingham B3 2NU  
Tel: 021 235 3698  
Fax: 021 236 1595

## THE 1993 RADICAL STATISTICS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

**Place:** Birmingham, Saturday 27th February 1993

**Venue:** The 'Oasis' lounge and the 'Cadbury' room  
St Francis Hall  
University of Birmingham  
Birmingham, B15 2TT

**Cost:** £7.00 to include the cost of lunch, coffee, tea and room hire. Cheques made payable to 'The University of Birmingham', to be sent to Dr Philip Bertrand, School of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT, making clear they are in connection with RadStats 1993 AGM. Put your name and address and telephone number on each cheque.

### Provisional timetable:

#### Friday evening, 26th February:

21.00 Meet in the Staff House bar at the University of Birmingham. This is about 200 yards east of the University Station in Birmingham (ten minutes by regular train from Birmingham New Street Railway Station).

#### Saturday, 27th February:

The conference and AGM will take place on the campus of the University of Birmingham in the St Francis Hall building. Within the building our initial meeting place at 10.00am for coffee and registration will be the Oasis lounge and coffee bar area on the lower ground room close by to enable separate group meetings to take place. We shall not have the use of the Worship room where it is possible other functions may be taking place.

10.00	Coffee
10.30	Meetings
13.00	Lunch
14.00	Meetings
15.40	Tea
16.00	Discussion
16.45	Annual General Meeting
17.30	Close

### Topics:

Suggestions, offers of presentations and willingness to lead sessions and discussion groups should be sent to:

Anthony Staines  
17 Springfield Mount  
University of Leeds  
Leeds, LS2 9NG

### Saturday evening:

Social gathering in member's home: a contribution to the cost of food expected, please contribute drinks to your own taste.

### Accommodation:

It is possible to put a few people up for the weekend. Please contact Philip Bertrand (0564 771 209) or Tony Fielding (021 449 7986).

### Access by road:

From the M6: leave M6 at 'spaghetti junction' taking the A38(M) towards the city centre. Approaching the city centre stay on the A38 following signposts for Bristol, essentially following the right hand lane though all the underpasses until you emerge on to Bristol Street which becomes Bristol Road. You should be heading along the A38 towards local district Selly Oak. About three miles beyond city centre at the end of a dual carriageway just before the Gun Barrels turn right in Edgbaston Park Road.

Proceed up Edgbaston Park Road. First left off this road is the pub car park, second left 100 yards on the left is St Francis Hall. Next left is University /road East where on turning into you will find the Student's Union on your left. St Francis Hall is to the left of the Student's Union. Access to the campus may be blocked by barriers.

From the south via M5: leave M5 at Lydiate Ash (junction 4) taking the A38 to Birmingham city centre. Proceed for about ten miles passing through Rubery, Northfield and Selly Oak. You should be proceeding along the Bristol Road along whence just before coming onto a dual carriageway turn left by Gun Barrels pub into Edgbaston Park Road. Then proceed as above.

### Access by rail:

It is best to get to New Street station and change to a local train going to 'University' station (the only one in Britain! - buy your ticket to 'University') in the direction of Redditch. University station is two stops from New Street, after 'Five Ways'. Emerging from University station, turn left and head straight on eastwards by roadways and footpaths for about a third of a mile passing first under Staff House then under the Maths and Physics bridge until, just before Edgbaston Park Road, the Students Union is on your right with St Francis Hall next to it.

### Access by bus:

From the city centre take a bus towards Selly Oak (61, 62 or 63), alighting at Edgbaston Park Road, whence as above.

## The Royal Statistical Society

### AN OPPORTUNITY NOT MISSED: THE AGM OF THE ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY

Cecilio Mar Molinero

The general meeting of the RSS was different in nature from earlier such events. The merger with the Institute of Statisticians (IoS) means that the rules that govern the Society are to be re-drafted. To this effect the AGM was to be followed by a discussion on the future of the Society.

For those who had not seen the announcement, it may be worth pointing out that issues under debate are: (i) whether the RSS should be a more democratic society, (ii) whether Council and Officers should or should not be elected, (iii) whether there should be an international (or European) dimension to the activities of the RSS, (iv) whether the RSS should become involved in relation to public policy issues, (v) other matters of internal organisation such as the services that the society offers to members, and how the merger with the IoS will affect the organisation.

The meeting was announced for Wednesday 10th June. It is probably the worst possible date for those of us who work in the academic world, just in the middle of the examinations period. I was not planning to go but was contacted by Alison Macfarlane, Roy Carr Hill, David Drew, Andrew Philpott Morgan, and Ludi Simpson,



## THE HEALTH OF THE NATION Challenges for a new government

This report of the Radical Statistics Health Group and Public Health Alliance conference on "The Health of the Nation", held in September last year, takes a constructively critical look at the green paper and offers some alternative approaches, which deserve to be considered in future policy making.

- Comparison with approaches in other countries shows that 'The Health of the Nation' failed to learn from new ideas and experience elsewhere, particularly those involving the community in health initiatives.
- Despite its claim to choose targets which measure health, 'The Health of the Nation' relies heavily on existing statistics about mortality and NHS resources and activities. It has few ideas about collecting new data more relevant to health.
- There has been little discussion about how to tackle the many tensions and conflicts within the Whitehall machinery which could have scuppered initiatives on health in the past and which need to be taken seriously in future plans.

Workshops made recommendations for action on areas which have been neglected by the government such as housing, inequalities, ethnicity and food.

The report is available at £3.75 including p & p for PHA and Radical Statistics members and £5.00 for non-members, from the Public Health Alliance, Room 204, Snow Hill House, 10-15 Livery Street, Birmingham B3 2NU.

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Please send me ..... copy/ies of The Health of the Nation - Challenges for a new government.  
Cheque with order please.

I enclose a cheque for £5.00 per copy including package and postage

Special rate to PHA/Radical Statistics members £3.75 per copy including p & p

*Cheques/Postal Orders made out to the Public Health Alliance*

Name .....

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode .....

Return to Public Health Alliance, Room 204 Snow Hill House, 10-15 Livery Street,  
Birmingham, B3 2NU Telephone 021 235 3698 Fax 021 236 1595

## Radical Statistics Health Group Public Health Alliance Critical Public Health

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION

### Rationing Healthcare: Careless Talk Costs Lives

This special number of *Critical Public Health*, due out in Spring 1993, brings together proceedings from a conference held on November 14 1992 to discuss the implications of explicit rationing in the NHS.

The conference was organised by the Radical Statistics Health Group and the Public Health Alliance and co-sponsored by COHSE, NALGO, NUPE, the Socialist Health Association and the journal *Critical Public Health*.

The journal includes articles by:

Miranda Mugford from the National Perinatal Epidemiological Unit in Oxford on the background to rationing in the NHS and why the government has decided to make it more explicit.

Mark Williams on the myth of infinite demand

David Hunter of the Nuffield Institute for Health Services Research on rationing and 'health gain' measurements.

Anna Coote of the Institute for Public Policy Research on how rationing will affect the government's declared aim of empowering users of the NHS.

And Len Doyal, the author of many standard works on medical ethics, on the morality of asking one group to determine how many health resources can be allocated to another.

The journal also contains a summing up of the conference by Mel Bartley and some short articles examining the impact of rationing on specific sectors, eg care of the elderly.

✕ \_\_\_\_\_  
Please send me ..... copies of *Rationing Healthcare: Careless Talk Costs Lives*.  
Cheque with order please.

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £3 per copy including p & p

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

*Cheques/Postal Orders made payable to Multilingual Matters, Bank House, 8a Hill Road, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7HH.*

*Radical Statistics* is available by subscription. Current rates are £5 per year for low waged (self defined) and £10 for waged, institutions, and overseas. The cost to the unwaged is £3. This news letter is available from the Radical Statistics Group, c/o London Hazards Centre, 3rd Floor, Headland House, 308 Grays Inn Road, London, WC1X 8DS.

*Radical Statistics* is usually produced three times per year.

All members of the Radical Statistics Group are invited to contribute to the newsletter. Articles may vary from brief notices to detailed articles. Letters and reviews are also welcome.

Articles should be sent to the next editor using the address below.

### **Data Protection Act**

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, any member of the Radical Statistics Group is entitled to ask:

- a) For a printout of his/her personal details and name and address as kept on the Radical Statistics Group computer.
- b) That his/her personal details do not be so stored. Anyone wishing to avail themselves of this right, please contact the Troika (address on inside front cover) with requests in triplicate.

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### **DEADLINE FOR COPY: 21ST DECEMBER 1992**

For those with access to computers the next editor will take contributions on 5.25" or 3.5" DOS discs, using Wordperfect or ASCII text (both if possible) mentioning the hardware the discs were prepared on. Please also include a hard copy of the contribution. The editor does not have extensive publishing facilities so if you are able to send clean finished copy, please do so using the following specifications:

A4 paper. 1" = 25mm margins on all four sides.

Articles: the preferred font is Bookman 13 point for text; subheadings are 18 point bold, title is 24 point bold. If Bookman is unavailable use your favoured alternative keeping close to the stated point sizes.

Figures: prepare separately as for inclusion on A4 page, indicating on the hard copy text where they should be included.

Any other details: prepare as this newsletter, or contact the editor.