Obituaries

Gerald Charles Joseph Bennett

Geriatrician who campaigned against the abuse of elderly people

Gerry Bennett devoted his professional and much of his personal life to the care of older people. His earliest research was concerned with clinical standards and delays in treatment. From there, and throughout the 1980s, he began to focus on the care of elderly patients, at that time a neglected specialty.

He was appointed a consultant at the London Hospital in 1984. Gerry was one of a handful of campaigning geriatricians who drew attention to the need for high level specialist care and research in that field. His research on pressure ulcers led later to the establishment of the pioneering East London Wound Healing Unit, where Gerry's commitment to an interdisciplinary approach and teamwork was apparent. The four bed unit combined the work of clinical nurse specialists, dermatologists, vascular surgeons, chiropodists, and social workers. As a member of the European advisory panel on pressure ulcers, he was able to influence clinical practice outside the United Kingdom and raise the profile of geriatric medicine internationally.

Gerry's work on wounds and injuries, together with his careful attention to patient experiences, led him, in the mid-1980s, to

expose the extent of abuse suffered by elderly patients. He campaigned and researched to promote greater understanding of the cause and effects of elder abuse. Again, he took this work worldwide. He was founder chairman and later president of the charity Action on Elder Abuse, and he cofounded the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), with links in Brazil, Canada, Australia, and Spain. Gerry was the main researcher for a World Health Organization sponsored project on

elder abuse in Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Canada, India, Kenya, Lebanon, and Sweden. The ensuing report, "Missing Voices," was published in 2002. This and other work took him, and INPEA, to the United Nations Assembly on Ageing and to contribute to UN investigations into age and gender discrimination and breaches of human rights.

In 1995 Gerry became medical director of Tower Hamlets Healthcare NHS Trust. After periods as a visiting professor at the Karolinska Institute and at Queen's University, Belfast, he became professor of health care of the elderly at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry in 2000.

He leaves his lifelong companion, Hywel, and his partner, Tom. [LEN DOYAL, SHAH EBRAHIM, SHEILA HILLIER, PETER MILLARD, ANTHEA TINKER, HILARY SCOTT]

Gerald Charles Joseph Bennett, professor of health care of the elderly Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry and former medical director Tower Hamlets Healthcare NHS Trust (b 28 July 1951; q Welsh School of Medicine 1976; FRCP), d 13 April 2003.

Michael John Davies

British Heart Foundation professor of cardiovascular pathology St George's Hospital Medical School, London, 1981-2001 (b Eltham, London, 1937; q Middlesex Hospital Medical School, London, 1961; MD, FRCPATH), died from metastatic colorectal cancer on 18 February 2003.

In 1969 Michael Davies was appointed senior lecturer in pathology at St George's, where he was to spend the rest of his career. He progressed to become reader in cardiac pathology in 1973, professor of cardiac pathology in 1977 (a personal chair), and, in 1981, the first British Heart Foundation professor of cardiovascular pathology. His contribution to our understanding of acquired heart disease, notably the dynamics

of coronary atherosclerosis, was remarkable. Of no less significance was his original work on conduction system abnormalities, valve disease, and the cardiomyopathies. He was editor in chief of *Heart* (formerly the *British Heart Journal*) from 1991 to 1999. He leaves a wife, Anthea, and two children. [CATHY CORBISHLEY, MARGARET BURKE]

Kantilal Chaturbhai Patel

Former consultant physician and paediatrician Nairobi, Kenya (b Tanzania 1928; q Bombay, India, 1953; DCh, MD, FRCP Ed), died from metastatic oesophageal cancer on 19 December 2002.

Kantilal C Patel was one of the first postgraduate qualified physicians and paediatricians to enter Kenya, where he practised from 1961 until his retirement in 1998. His origins were humble, and he was sent to his native village in India at the age of

four, where he was brought up by his grandmother. After qualifying and postgraduate studies, he came to the United Kingdom in 1959 to further his postgraduate experience. He was senior registrar in paediatrics at the City General Hospital in Sheffield before migrating to Kenya. He later decided to concentrate mainly on adult medicine, and subspecialised in cardiology. He leaves a wife, three children, and five grandchildren. [NIKUNJ K PATEL]

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