RIPOSTE!

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Health Professions in Sports Medicine

The article by J. G. P. Williams is confusing. Precisely what is he recommending? Paragraph five seems to suggest that medically qualified practitioners should form their own specific interest group. Other professions have, in fact, given a lead in this course of action e.g. the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Sports Medicine. It would certainly seem a good idea for medical practitioners to follow suit. But this is not the business of the multi-disciplinary BASM. Williams should test the feasibility of such a procedure by contacting medical practitioners via journals aimed specifically at the medical profession.

The references to hierarchical structure are distinctly authoritarian, and provide an amusing trip back to the dark ages. Is it a coincidence that his article was preceded by a picture of a knight on horseback?*

Other countries take a more enlightened approach to the relationships between professions concerned with the prevention and cure of injury and disease. In Australia, for example, they are all included in the term "Health Professions". Groups are not referred to as "para" or "supplementary" to the medical or any other profession.

On the matter of education and academic background the number of degree courses in the "subservient" (at this point I tug my forelock) professions is increasing. Degree courses now exist in nursing, physiotherapy and speech therapy, and other professions are investigating keenly the possibility of similarly advancing their status. The students on these new degree courses possess pre-entry 'A' level grades which confer eligibility for a wide range of academic and professional degree courses.

Is Williams playing at King Canute? Is he, in fact trying to put the clock back?

I note that five of the nine members of the Editorial Board of the Journal would not be eligible for membership of the proposed uppermost stratum of a reorganised BASM.

By all means let medical practitioners form their own specific interest group. But let the BASM remain a common meeting ground.

P.S. ....

Was it a glove? It smelt more like a sock.

*Yes, it was! The drawing will be used for any statements that come to this column of "Challenge". Ed.