

## EDITORIAL

THIS volume contains several particularly interesting papers. In various volumes of *Paraplegia* the Epidemiology of spinal cord injuries has been discussed and Fine's and his colleagues' paper on Epidemiology Perspective is another welcome addition. The number of traumatic paraplegics and tetraplegics in individual countries is still unknown and it should be a policy of spinal centres in individual countries to try to compile proper statistics if possible in close cooperation with health authorities. So far health authorities in various countries do not know about the incidence of spinal injuries in their respective countries and it would be a duty of the leaders of spinal cord injury centres to encourage proper statistics on this multi-disciplinary subject.

Since the introduction of the Possum at Stoke Mandeville as an aid for high cervical cord lesions several modifications have been published and this volume contains three more papers on this subject by Parish, Andrews *et al.* and Bérard *et al.*

A particularly interesting paper is that of Henshaw on the Swivel Walk of Paraplegics and Tetraplegics. This is of special importance in young children to encourage the upright position and thus may prevent the sometimes severe scoliosis of the immature spinal column. Further experience on this walking aid will be of great importance.

The paper of Abrahams and Shrosbree on Stabilisation of the Cervical Spine and in particular Shrosbree's paper on Neurological Sequella of Reduction of Fracture Dislocations of the Cervical Spine have been a matter of lively discussion.

From time to time reports appear in the public press of 'miracle' cures in the case of sufferers from spinal injuries, in particular tetraplegics, which scientifically are quite unproven but raise false hope in these unfortunate people. Members of the Society will remember the sensational claim of a Canadian surgeon some years ago, that by excising the damaged segment of the cervical cord and rejoining the two ends improvement was achieved in a case of tetraplegia and six other patients. Naturally, this raised great hopes amongst paraplegics and tetraplegics and I received reports from various countries that these people chartered planes to fly to Canada. At my immediate suggestion to the Dean of the Medical Faculty of the University of Toronto, a Committee was set up to investigate these claims which proved, as one would expect, completely false.

In recent years, other unproven claims of improvement or cures have come from Russia. Patients who have returned home following operations have been examined by competent specialists who could not substantiate any of these claims. The most recent misleading propaganda for special treatment in Russia has been made by a tetraplegic in the U.S.A., who also claimed in the press great improvement following conservative treatment. His name is Mr Kent Waldrup. No doubt his propaganda in the press may again arouse confusion amongst many cervical injuries and I feel the attention of all American colleagues of the Society should be drawn to this to be able to take the necessary steps to rectify any misrepresentation by the press.