neurological illness such as cerebrovascular disease are so low. Although there is very considerable variation in referral rates from different general practitioners,^{10 11} it seems probable that referral rates to neurologists in the UK reflect consultant availability rather than need. Equally, the ready availability of neurologists in the US, where the number per million population is already nine times higher, and where it is suggested that many more are needed,⁵ indicates that many US neurologists are providing care that in the UK is provided by a family doctor. There are as yet few measures of clinical outcome, other than mortality, that can measure the impact of care upon the outcome of many disabling illnesses. Research should be undertaken to measure the increment in quality of care provided by neurologists over and above that provided by primary care physicians.

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Cobb's views on functional and organic illness

Physicians still tenaciously cling to the old dichotomy of two categories of illness: functional and organic. Professor Stanley Cobb, Bullard Professor of Neuropathology at Harvard, who preceded Raymond Adams, expatiated eloquently on this topic in his model introductory book, now sadly neglected by many students of Neurology.

"The term 'functional' is frequently misused to mean 'psychogenic.' This is a barbarism of the clinic, but has become almost routine out-patient slang. 'Functional' is a useful word in physiology and architecture. It should not be spoiled by other less acceptable usages. 'Organic' is used in a hazy way to mean that since 'organs' are involved there is something 'really wrong.' More specifically the users of 'organic' usually mean in psychiatry that there is a lesion of the brain. ('Lesion' being a visible abnormality.) If they mean this, why not say definitely what organ is meant and speak of 'cerebral lesions'? . . .

In a provocative fashion which would not please all modern philosophical concepts of the brain-mind relationship he averred:

"1. No biological process goes on without change in structure;

2. Wherever the brain functions there is organic change;

3. The brain is the organ of the mind.

If we accept these three we must admit that 'organic' change takes place whenever a person has a thought. This is an important function of the brain. All function is organic, so the slang use of the term 'organic' or 'functional' is meaningless. If a line is drawn arbitrarily, its position is ordained by the point to which technology has advanced in the year. . . In other words, the line between 'organic' and 'functional' (and between physical and mental is an artefact.)"

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