

BRIEFS FROM THE LITERATURE

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FOREIGN RESIDENTS House officers who come from non-English speaking countries are frequently handicapped in their training by the language barrier. They become discouraged with their reception, with the type of residencies they are offered, and they return home dissatisfied with American training institutions where they have often been treated as second class citizens. Many residency directors who have worked with foreign residents have experienced difficulties in selecting them, in teaching them after their arrival, and in getting them to carry out directions. Both the foreign residents and the training institutions often do not realize that a big part of the problem is language. In order to assure themselves that applicants from non-English speaking countries are competent in English, residency directors may ask that applicants take standardized English examinations (such as those by Dr. Robert Lado of Michigan University and A. L. Davis of American University in Washington) now available in testing centers in many American universities and in U. S. embassies and information centers around the world. (Also, the examination of the Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates includes an English comprehension examination.) If a residency director would carefully review the results of these examinations and secure the advice of language teachers and testing directors, he could with confidence discourage the foreign resident who is poor in English.

What advice should be given to a prospective house officer qualified in other respects but deficient in English? Certainly a few months spent in an intensive English course will be worth years of haphazard efforts abroad—or worse, in American hos-

pital situations. The English course should be linguistically sound: its materials should be based on a careful comparison of the *sound system* and *structural system* of his native language and the target language (English). Intensive courses are offered at Michigan University, Georgetown University, Columbia University, New York University, and American University. Many American universities offer special courses in English as a foreign language throughout the year which would be of assistance to foreign physicians who, already embarked in hospital training, still need to acquire fluency. However, the trainee whose English is very weak should abandon hospital training and concentrate full time on English.

Unfortunately, there are few good texts available for the student who wishes to teach himself. Since all linguistic materials emphasize the aural-oral approach, the student should have a teacher who has native or near native, control of the language. In the absence of a teacher, he should make every effort to find recordings to supplement his reading. (Further details on tests, courses, texts, records, and information sources are in the authors' reprint available from the Division of Anesthesiology, University of Utah.) (Slager, W. R., and Ballinger, C. M.: *Language Problems of Foreign Physicians, Resident Physician 4: 102 (Feb.) and 156 (March), 1958.*)

RETICULAR SYSTEM The reticular core is a continuous meshwork of nerve cells and fibers extending from the corpus striatum throughout the brain stem and spinal cord. The brain stem process has both up and downstream effects. Most investigators indicate that muscle relaxants