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**EDITORIAL**

**T**HERE has frequently been criticism in the past of physical medicine because so many of its methods and the use of so much of its considerable armamentarium are without sound scientific evaluation. It is maintained, rightly so, that almost none of our work has been controlled, that insufficient research is carried out, and that many of our results are purely empirical.

A true assessment of the effect of our treatments is most difficult when so many variable factors have to be considered. For example, one person's reaction to pain is entirely different from another's. At present we have only visual measurement of a muscle contraction for comparison during a muscle test, and other similar examples could be quoted.

We probably all agree that, given time, we would like to carry out accurate research on the effects of our treatments. Meanwhile we must not lose sight of the fact that something quite as important as the short-wave diathermy machine, or the number of pounds a quadriceps can resist, is the approach and personality of the physiotherapist.

On certain occasions, an accurately applied short wave treatment given by a physiotherapist, in

whom the patient has no confidence, will do less good than one where the machine is not even turned on, but the physiotherapist's attitude is constructive. We must not ever forget that, to the physiotherapist the patient may be one of hundreds, but, to the patient, the physiotherapist is an individual, and he must never be led to think otherwise.

Kindliness and properly assessed sympathy go hand in hand with interest in the patient as a whole. Patients can be exhausting and irritating, but the physiotherapist has no right to be in the profession if she is unable to cope with these situations. She has the advantage, though it may often seem to the contrary, of spending more time with the patient than probably anyone else in the medical team, and has, therefore, ample opportunity of encouraging and getting the best from the patient.

So that, although we may not really know the physiological effects of ultrasonics or the like, let us at least be proud of the fact that our own output is constant and giving of its best to the patient psychologically.

L.E.D.