

*Current Contents/Clinical Practice—
A New Tool for Optimum Selection
in Maintaining Current Awareness*

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A physician once summed up his attitude toward the “science information problem” in these words: “The volume of the literature in any branch of science is large, but especially so in medicine. To make matters worse, not a day passes that more articles aren’t thrown onto what is already a veritable mountain of material . . . There is just too little time and too much to read.”

The physician was Wilhelm Ploucquet, and what I have quoted he wrote in Latin in 1793.¹ Thus, we should be able to appreciate that the “information explosion” is by no means a recent phenomenon. “Current awareness”—keeping up with important developments in one’s field—depends, as it did in Ploucquet’s day, upon use of the current journal literature. But the battle against professional obsolescence depends not primarily upon how much one reads or has time to read, but upon an awareness of what there is to choose from. The

problem is one of selection. It is this type of “current awareness” that ISI® hopes to improve for practicing physicians and their colleagues with publication of *Current Contents/Clinical Practice*. The first issue of this new edition of *Current Contents* will appear January 3, 1973.

CC®/Clinical Practice will allow the reader to cover the primary clinical literature in about half an hour every week. Each weekly issue of *CC/CP* will reproduce the contents pages from the latest issues of the 700 journals it will cover. In addition, each issue will contain a *Weekly Subject Index*, which will allow the reader to pinpoint specific subjects. There will also be an *Author Index and Address Directory* to facilitate ordering of reprints. Addresses in the *Directory*—and in all other ISI services as well—will be expanded beyond the format now used so as to include any and all information supplied in the journal.

A great deal has been said during the past few years about the inadequacy of medical information systems. ISI's resources in the collection and organization of medical research information are unrivalled. In fact, some research scientists have described ISI's *Current Contents* as one of America's great contributions to worldwide medical science. Now ISI is extending its expertise to the practitioner's needs in a practical fashion. While *Current Contents/Clinical Practice* may not revolutionize the practice of medicine, we suspect it may revolutionize the reading habits of physicians, just as it has those of research scientists.

The forthcoming publication of *CC/Clinical Practice* was first announced in an editorial in these pages in August 1972.² That editorial apparently created some confusion regarding our coverage policies. The publication of *CC/Clinical Practice* does not mean any significant change in the coverage of *Current Contents/Life Sciences*. *CC/LS* will continue to cover the core clinical journals as part of its extensive coverage of the biomedical and

related sciences. The new *CC/Clinical Practice* is intended for present readers of *CC/LS* who require a much broader clinical coverage. It is primarily intended for new readers whose time, work, and interests are strictly clinically oriented.

Very few professions present an information problem with the scope and urgency of that which faces the medical practitioner. His is an immediate and practical problem, and *Current Contents/Clinical Practice* will help him use to best advantage the time he must give to the "continuing education" that is a health worker's daily responsibility.

1. Ploucquet, W.G. *Initia bibliothecae medico-practica et chirurgica realis sive repertorii medicinae practicae et chirurgicae*. (Tübingen; Cotta, 1793-1797, 8 v.).
2. Garfield, E. ISI announces forthcoming publication of *CC/CP-Current Contents/Clinical Practice*. *Current Contents* No. 32, August 9, 1972, p. 5-10.