

psychologist is likely to be the most suitable person to provide quantitative measures of the persons' functioning (eg intelligence, anxiety, stress etc) in the context of either a crime or an accident. The psychiatrist is more appropriately trained to comment on a person's medical diagnostic status and treatment including medication. The essential difference in training between the two professional groups will influence the assessment and treatment techniques used by each.

The psychologist trained as a scientist will apply the scientific method, attempt to measure all the relevant variables and make conclusion on the basis of statistical norms. The psychiatrist trained as a medical practitioner will assess the patient's symptomatology and relate this to likely diagnosis and prognosis and ultimately determine the treatment course accordingly. Sometimes a psychologist and psychiatrist will be

asked the same questions and offer similar answers. Usually a psychologist and psychiatrist will apply different processes of deduction to reach the conclusions. Depending on the nature of the referral the psychologists and psychiatrists will compliment each other in providing a more complete picture of the client's circumstances."

Readers are urged to bear these comments in mind as lawyers who deal in personal injury and indeed criminal matters, when seeking opinion from psychologists and psychiatrists.

One of the main lessons I believe displayed in this appealed judgement is that experience, qualification and clinical expertise are important factors and are of relevance to cases at hand when deciding to accept an expert opinion in the court of law. It is our task as assisting professionals to provide opinions to courts who then make a decision upon matter of facts. The

opinions of psychologists and psychiatrists are but one source of information to assist the courts to form a judgement taking into account all relevant aspects of evidence in relation to a particular matter. Thus it is the case for lawyers to be aware that psychologists and psychiatrists operate in a scientist-practitioner paradigm and as such can be of great value to assist the court particularly in injury matters.

Both psychologists and psychiatrists have a role to play. It is the aim of this article to assist lawyers in deciding the appropriate expert in any particular matter. Such clarification is hoped to also assist both professions (legal and mental health) to form a closer equitable relationship in forensic matters. ■

Dr Phillip Halstead is a Forensic Psychologist Hypnotherapist and APLA member from Gladstone in Queensland. He can be contacted on **phone** 07 4972 4098.

The Equine Lawyers Association

Dr B F Peachey, Brigg, UK

The Equine Lawyers Association was originally formed in Britain as a small interest group in 1995, but in 1997 was taken over by the publishers of 'Horse Law - the Equine Law & Litigation Reports'. 'Horse Law' became the journal of the Association, and Dr Barry Peachey, Britain's leading animal litigation specialist, became Chairman. In the last seven months the Association has increased in size five fold. It must be the fastest growing special interest group in English law, and is exceeding all its expectations thus far.

The journal, which is published bi-monthly, contains reports of equine litigation across the whole range of courts and tribunals. Focus articles include matters of topical equine law interest, and full listings

of all members are published. The Association has lawyer members, and professional services members, the latter group being mostly expert witnesses. As such its prime objective is to be an information forum for anyone with equine legal interests. It has started to attract members from other common law jurisdictions, especially the US and Canada, and is keen to encourage this international perspective.

Much equine litigation is centred around personal injury.

On Friday 16 January, the first ever National Equine Law Conference was held at Hartpury College, Gloucestershire, and

a variety of speakers addressed the audience on a range of topical equine law matters. This Conference will now become an annual event.

The Association maintains close links with the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), the English equivalent of APLA, and there are a good number of lawyers who are members of both organisations. Much equine litigation is centred around personal injury. The Association is keen to foster further links around the world, and any members of APLA with horse interests would be warmly welcomed. ■

Dr B F Peachey, Equine Lawyers Association, PO Box 23, Brigg, Lincs DN20 8TN, UK. **Phone/fax** +44 1652 688819, **email** b.peachey@virgin.net