

The Joint Cardiology Committee now suggests a target figure for a cardiac centre of 750-1000 coronary artery bypass operations annually.

Thus within the South Western Region it would be logical to have two centres with one of those providing a service for paediatric cardiac surgery.

- 3.2 Residents of Cornwall and most, if not all, of Devon would benefit from having a centre nearer to their home.

For most patients and their families heart disease and its treatment is a very stressful experience and the stress is increased where travel to a distant and unknown centre is required. This is particularly true for some families from Cornwall and West Devon who have never been as far as Bristol, let alone London.

The cost of travel is significant in itself but probably provides a proxy measure of other difficulties for the families. Appendix 3 shows the overall cost of travel for patients in Devon and Cornwall, assuming:

- (a) five return journeys are required by the patient and his family for each heart operation (the number is often greater than this);
- (b) travel is by second class rail;
- (c) the cost of travel from a particular departure point represents the average cost for the population of the district represented;
- (d) 550 operations are performed per million population.

The table in appendix 3 illustrates the difficulties experienced by Devon and Cornwall patients in travelling to Bristol or to London for heart surgery.

#### 4. THE CHOICE BETWEEN EXETER AND PLYMOUTH FOR A SECOND REGIONAL CARDIAC SURGERY UNIT

##### 4.1 Introduction

It is generally agreed that if a second cardiac surgery unit is provided in the South Western Region, it should either be in Exeter or Plymouth.

There are a number of factors which might influence a decision.

##### 4.2 View of the host districts

Both Exeter and Plymouth health authorities would welcome the chance to provide the second unit in the region to serve the population of Devon and Cornwall.

##### 4.3 Natural division of populations and communications

If there are to be two centres for a service in the South Western Region the population distribution and communications are such that two obvious centres present, i.e. Bristol to serve Cheltenham, Gloucester, Avon and Somerset with their total population of 1.8 million and Plymouth to serve