While doctors were deciding to give them selves a 10 per cent pay increase, a woman with a stroke couldn't get a doctor to treat her.

She lives at Davistown. She is 81 and a pensioner, seven miles from Gosford. Had a Gosford doctor gone to treat her he would have missed out on the 40c a mile medical men charge for travelling so far for a patient.

Yet Sydney taxi operators say it costs them at the most 8c a mile to run a cab and, after paying drivers, anything over 11c a mile is clear profit.

This is the most intriguing sidelight of a week in which doctors have declared that their families will go hungry if they don't get higher fees — while refusing to disclose the figures on which they based their decision to vote themselves a raise.

The Friday before last the Davistown pensioner awoke to find she had lost the use of her right arm and could not speak properly.

Her 79-year-old husband rang a Gosford doctor for help.

He had misgivings about ringing because the last time he had rung the doctor he had been told his trouble was nothing more than old age — and had just finished up in hospital with a serious complaint.

The old man rang the Gosford doctor twice to get help for his wife. Twice the doctor's receptionist said the doctor was busy. Finally she advised him to ring another doctor.

When he asked which doctor he could ring the receptionist told him to look in the telephone directory.

Complaint

The man eventually obtained the services of a doctor who had set up a practice in a small settlement close to Davistown than Gosford.

Ironically, the new doctor had been in trouble with the Australian Medical Association because a Gosford doctor had complained that a local paper had advertised the fact that the new man had opened a practice.

The secretary of the Brisbane Water branch of the AMA, Dr D. W. Sooy, said yesterday he had heard no complaints that local doctors had refused to treat outlying patients.

He said there were 35 local doctors who covered 712 square miles and 70,000 permanent residents, plus an annual million tourists.

Dr Sooy said Gosford doctors charged $2.30 for surgery consultations, $2.60 for home visits and $3 for calls after 8 pm.

He said they charged 75 cents a mile to visit patients who lived more than two miles from the surgery but only 40 cents a mile if the patient was a pensioner.

Dr Sooy said the doctors could not claim mileage if there was another doctor closer to the pensioner patient.

Gosford doctors could not claim mileage to Davistown because of the presence of the new doctor in the nearby settlement he said.

Sydney taxi operators said the straight running costs of operating in and out of town cut at 7.5 cents a mile but more expensive to operate than other cities.

Earnings

Inquiries about surgery rents, power bills and wages for a single receptionist indicated that the average doctor should be well on the way to making a profit after interviewing 25 paying patients a week in his rooms.

A doctor with 75 patients a week in his surgery should be grossing as much as the average business executive.

The Taxation Department has worked out the following comparison of earnings by doctors and other professional men.

Mean actual incomes (taxable income, plus total deductions, plus exempt income, plus investment allowances) are:

- **Doctors**: $10,174 Australia-wide and $10,204 in NSW.
- **Dentists**: $8023 and $7835.
- **Lawyers**: $10,139 and $10,301.
- **Accountants**: $6772 and $6848.
- **Other professions in the engineering group**: $3879 and $3831.