

BASIC SEXUAL MEDICINE

Eric Trimmer

Heinemann
London (1978)

238 pages. Price £6.95

It is to the credit of British society, with its tradition of reservation and sexual prudishness, that it has coped without being too shocked by a decade of well publicized revolution in the mores of sexual problems. Brook clinics for the unmarried, family planning clinics going psycho-sexual, and Martin Cole with his surrogate partners in their turn all seemed to surprise, titillate, and mildly outrage the populace, and as recently as 1974 my description of the Ryan's Daughter Syndrome was cited by Katherine Whitehorn of the *Observer* as a rare example of general-practice interest in the subject. However, under Dr Eric Trimmer's editorship, the *British Journal of Sexual Medicine* had already begun a year before that and his book is now a fitting culmination of his leading role in bringing this new branch of the profession so successfully to his colleagues at large.

This book is the acme of practical erudition as a concise, basic textbook which succeeds—a rare thing indeed—in its avowed intention of suiting the needs of all types and grades of health professionals. Its first third is devoted entirely to normal anatomy and function and is thoroughly readable, comprehensive, and up to date in its treatment of them. The middle section covers various dysfunctions and abnormalities, including treatments, but the remainder, under the guise of four appendices, gives a wealth of information essential for anyone who is consulted on psycho-sexual problems. It

is the first appendix, on "Practical Therapeutic Techniques", which summarizes treatment routines so well, that justifies keeping the book in the consulting room.

Of course, even in this day and age it is easy to avoid diagnosing sexual problems; but as this form of medical escapism becomes less acceptable, so the possession of what I am sure will become a standard textbook will be essential.

MALCOLM AYLETT

HELP YOURSELF TO HEALTH

Scottish Health Education Unit

SHEU
Edinburgh (1978)

59 pages

Dependency on medical care appears to be increasing out of proportion to any increase in the numbers of those who deliver it. Therefore, any move which encourages patients to prevent illness, to manage minor maladies themselves, and to use the medical services responsibly, deserves attention.

The initiative of the Scottish Health Education Unit in setting up a Joint Working Party with the Scottish Council of the Royal College of General Practitioners is to be applauded. *Help Yourself To Health*, written by experienced family doctors, is the result of the labours of this Working Party.

Aimed primarily at social class 3, the booklet lays greater emphasis on management than prevention. Most of the advice offered is sound, but I was disappointed that no guidance was offered in the section on Epilepsy on avoiding fits provoked by watching

television. My most serious criticism is of the statement on page 38, which implies that irregular and heavy periods at the time of the menopause can be ignored by any woman who is sure that she is not pregnant!

The booklet is to be distributed free by family doctors, and although those who read it can hardly fail to benefit, I doubt if it will reach those who most frivolously use medical services.

Health education is, in my mind, still struggling to come to grips with the immense problems it faces, but at least the Working Party who produced this booklet have made a start.

COLIN WAINE

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN HEALTH EDUCATION

A Review of Theory and Practice

B. K. Tones

Scottish Health Education Unit
Edinburgh (1977)

90 pages. Price 85p

The importance of preventive medicine is becoming clearer in the NHS and health education will always remain one of the main methods of prevention.

This new Occasional Paper from the Scottish Health Education Unit describes a logical approach to this and emphasizes the intellectual necessity of testing before and after the educational process. Only in this way is it possible to evaluate the change occurring as a result of the education. Numerous examples are given.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

REPORTS

Annual Spring Meeting

THE 1979 Annual Spring Meeting of the College was held in Cardiff from 20 to 22 April and was arranged by the South-East Wales Faculty.

Symposium: "When the chips are down"

The Welsh Council of the Royal College of General Practitioners arranged a symposium under the chairmanship of Dr R. Harvard Davis, DM, FRCGP, Reader in

General Practice at the Welsh National School of Medicine and Chairman of the Welsh Council, which took place at the South Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education, Cyncoed, Cardiff on Friday, 20 April.

Introduction

Dr Harvard Davis welcomed the large numbers attending the symposium and explained that it was