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# GENERAL PRACTICE LITERATURE

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## NEW BOOKS

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### **PRESERVATION OF PERSONAL HEALTH IN WARM CLIMATES**

*The Ross Institute of Tropical Hygiene*  
London (1981)

108 pages. Price £1 (post free)

This 8th edition of a book with a history dating back to the First World War has much sound domestic, social and psychological advice, but it is hampered by the inheritances from previous editions (for example pages are wasted on describing mosquitos and their life cycles). I feel it would benefit from being completely rewritten in a modern format and including a clear summary of the important points of advice.

The section on Medicine and Dressings is inadequate, old fashioned and seems to assume close proximity to a doctor—often a false assumption. In particular there is no mention of metronidazole, which is an invaluable addition to the lay person's medical kit, in treating amoebic dysentery. The recommended treatment of diarrhoea with tetracycline or streptomycin is contentious, to say the least (and there is no warning about the use of tetracycline in children or in pregnancy). There is no discussion about broad spectrum antibiotics, antibiotic creams or antiscabies treatment.

I can recommend this book for gener-

al advice to my patients and friends contemplating work abroad, but I have reservations about some of its medical advice. I cannot help but compare it to the excellent book *Where There is No Doctor* (Warner, 1977).

ROGER PEPIATT

#### Reference

Warner, D. (1977). *Where There is no Doctor. A Village Health Care Handbook*. California: Hesperian Foundation.

### **PRIMARY HEALTH CARE BUILDINGS**

*Ruth Cammock*

93 pages. Price £10.50

At £10.50 this looks an expensive buy, but for anyone concerned with planning a new health centre or surgery it could hardly be better value. It provides a logical framework for doctors, planners and architects within which they can begin to organize their thoughts to some purpose.

There are three main sections. In the first part the activities of a primary care centre, whether it be a health centre or a group practice surgery, are analysed so as to provide job-descriptions for all those involved.

In the second part the various general practice activities are analysed in terms of the space and conditions that are needed for efficiency. The conditions

include the kind of environment that has to be produced, such as standards of illumination, sound exclusion and privacy; services, which include water supply, electric sockets and telephone intercom; and equipment—desks, bookshelves, waste bins. This section offers practical advice which is relevant for all new buildings and would be an excellent check-list for those trying to decide what it is they really need.

Part three discusses the relationship of the spaces needed in a surgery. This is done by conceiving the organization of the surgery as consisting of three zones: the joint-use zone, the staff zone and the public zone. Various ways of easing circulation of human beings, with their various functions, through these zones are described.

A final section discusses the environmental needs of the occupants. Headings such as Team Size, Reassurance, Distraction and Relaxation, Privacy, Dignity and Status, should be sufficient to indicate Dr Cammock's concern for the effect of buildings on the behaviour of patients and all those who care for them.

There was once a happy day when general practitioners seeking advice on new buildings could gain the services of Ruth Cammock in person. I doubt if this is still true, but, if we cannot have her, at least we can have her book. It is not for general reading, but rather for those who are into the hard business making decisions about what kind of building they want and getting their ideas across to architects and builders.

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## BOOKS FOR PATIENTS

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### **A PATIENT'S GUIDE TO OPERATIONS**

*Dr David Delvin*

*Penguin Books Ltd*  
*Harmondsworth (1981)*

329 pages. Price £1.95

With so many books to his name and so many columns filled every one, two or four weeks, Dr Delvin ought by now to know how to communicate in print. His

latest book is excellent evidence that he can: he seems to have thought of every common question that might be asked about every operation from tonsillectomy to transplants, and his answers are clear and to the point. His style is arch—jokes and exclamation marks abound—but clear and easy to understand. Although one might ask how many people will have their attitude to operations changed by reading this book, there is certainly enough information in it to remedy any ignorance of the facts. Nevertheless—and the author will probably agree—it is no substitute for the highly desirable practice, followed in some enlightened units, of providing leaflets about operations. Perhaps the book will succeed best by helping people to realize that doctors and nurses do not mind

being questioned about what they are doing.

S. L. BARLEY

### **YOU AND YOUR ALLERGY**

*Pharmacia Diagnostics*

A brief but comprehensive guide to all aspects of allergy (skin, nose, eyes and lungs) at home and at work. The illustrations are dramatic line drawings which, for the most part, point up the text successfully. It is a useful booklet to hand to patients, and is free from Pharmacia (Great Britain) Ltd, Prince Regent Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 1NE.