

like later generations of American medical authors, he has something to say and says it very well indeed.

The sub-title, *A Modern Parable*, is apt. This concrete, specific account of the ethics of clinical decision-making

and research is worth more than the entire product of our recently burgeoning medical ethics industry, with its abstract, pretentious and usually irrelevant hand-wringing on the outskirts of medicine. No teaching practice should be

without it, every general practitioner and trainee should read it.

JULIAN TUDOR HART  
*General Practitioner, Glyncoirweg*

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## BOOKS FOR PATIENTS

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### OVERCOMING ARTHRITIS

*Dr Frank Dudley Hart*

*Martin Dunitz*

*London (1981)*

*152 pages. £2.50*

This is one of the best books for patients that we have seen for some time. The pictures are first class and have been chosen with great care to illustrate the many practical tips on coping with arthritis in everyday life. The writing is straightforward and sensibly optimistic, and through the book there is great emphasis on how to live with these chronic and incurable diseases. The price is very reasonable for such a high-class production.

### PSORIASIS. A GUIDE TO ONE OF THE COMMONEST SKIN DISEASES

*R. Marks*

*Dunitz*

*London (1981)*

*107 pages. Price £2.50*

This series is rapidly establishing itself as the best in the field, the books being invariably well written and attractively produced. The tone of this one is realis-

tic yet encouraging, and amply justifies the title 'Positive Health Guide'. It can be unreservedly recommended to patients, and contains many good ideas that will probably not be known to doctors and nurses in general practice. In these inflationary times we just have to get used to the idea that a popular paperback can cost £2.50 and yet be good value for money.

### THE REAL FOOD GUIDE. VOL. I, FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES. VOL. II, PULSES, GRAINS AND SEEDS

*Cass McCallum*

*Richard Drew Publishing Ltd, Edinburgh (1981)*

*210, 196 pages. Price £2.95 each*

How important is good nutrition to good health? What has medicine lost since British doctors virtually ceased to offer dietary advice as the main method of managing illness? Are our patients wiser than we are in asking for advice so much more often than we give it? Recent evidence suggests that nutritional factors (folic acid and vitamins) may be important in the genesis of fetal malformations, and in his James Mackenzie lecture in 1978, Dr W. W. Yellowlees presented a powerful case for the effect of good food on health.

The question is, how do doctors use the new evidence, and the new appraisals of old evidence? As scientists, we are not attracted by what seem to be the wild claims and prejudices of cranks and faddists, and the results of nutritional

experiments are seldom presented in medical journals. What, then, should our sources of information be? These two books contain a great deal to help us: they tell us about fruit, vegetables, pulses, seeds and grains in terms of their food value, and how best to preserve this in storage and cooking. There is little purely scientific material which duplicates medical textbooks, but about a quarter of each volume contains recipes that are little different from those in many other wholefood cookery books. Therein lies the attraction of any new recipe book: we all get bored to some extent by the same food cooked in the same way, and a fresh look at old recipes is hard to resist. Doctors who think that the move to wholefood is for freaks alone will be pleasantly surprised if they buy these books and learn to cook from them. They can be highly recommended to patients.

### YOU CAN DRINK AND STAY HEALTHY

*Dr Robert Linn*

*Sphere Books Ltd*

*London (1981)*

*179 pages. Price £1.25*

Well worth looking at in a bookshop to see if it is the kind of thing that you would want to recommend to young people, to patients asking for information, or even to someone with a drinking problem who seems to be in the frame of mind to follow advice. Written for a US audience, but perfectly applicable to the UK.

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