

BOOKS FOR PATIENTS

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Andrew Stanway

Penguin Books
London (1982)

294 pages. Price £2.95

Dr Stanway is a member of the Royal College of Physicians and his book has a foreword by Dr Forbes, who is a Fellow of the same College. This seemed to be a good beginning for a book addressed to a lay audience and concerned with an important topic. Alas, my hopes were speedily dashed.

I had hoped for a clear account of the reasons which underlie the popularity and successes of alternative medicine and a scientific assessment of the basis of the various techniques. Dr Stanway does not seem to appreciate either the natural history of disease, the nature of symptoms or the power of the placebo. His criticism of the techniques themselves shows no evidence of scientific scepticism.

This book should not be recommended to patients.

JAMES S. MCCORMICK
Professor of General Practice
University of Dublin

COLLINS FAMILY MEDICAL HANDBOOK

I. A. C. MacQueen (ed.)

Collins
London (1981)

436 pages. Price £3.95

An abridgement of a large book; small format, small type, small illustrations. The result is quite comprehensive, but old fashioned and not very attractive, the illustrations especially resembling those from a nineteenth-century dictionary.

AVOIDING HEART ATTACKS

DHSS

HMSO
London (1981)

69 pages. Price £1.50

Another (yet another) booklet full of facts amassed clearly but in considerable

detail with the aim of delineating the risk factors and advising people how to alter them. The target audience is "people working in the health, social and education services" and "the individual reader". Can it possibly do that job?

UNDERSTANDING ASTHMA

Sean Hilton

The Chest, Heart and Stroke Association
London (1981)

27 pages. Price 40p

A small booklet, quite clearly written, with almost no illustrations. It is cheap, but has few other outstanding merits.

LIVING WITH ANGINA

Kenneth Gray

The Chest, Heart and Stroke Association
Tavistock House North, London,
WC1H 9JE. (1982)

23 pages. Price 40p plus postage

One of a series. The writing is clear and fairly simple, and runs to 23 pages without illustrations in a small booklet. It has the advantage of being cheap, but is so dully presented that it is unlikely to compete with the much better-produced books which are very little more money.

IN TOUCH. AIDS AND SERVICES FOR BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED PEOPLE

Margaret Ford and Thena Heshel

BBC
London (1982)

295 pages. Price £2.95

It is a cliché to say that books are packed with information—but this one is. It is also a cliché to say that everyone concerned with blind people should own a copy—but they should. Of all the books produced for a group of patients, this is by far the most comprehensive we have seen and we look forward to confirmation of the authors' hopes that Braille and tape editions will soon be produced. (There is already a Moon edition available from the Moon branch of the Royal National Institute for the Blind.)

CASSETTE TAPES

HOME TREATMENT OF STRAINS AND SPRAINS; STRESS AND THE DRIVING TEST

Sound Health Services, 10
Westcare Gdns, Stechford,
Birmingham, B33 8RF (1981)

£3.49 each (£2.49 to doctors and similar medical organizations)

The content of these tapes is unexceptionable, but the speaker's delivery and the quality of the recording are so dull that they cannot really be recommended.

THE INSOMNIA CASSETTE

Nial Reynolds

Nial Reynolds
Lowestoft (1981)

£5.75

The author is a clinical psychologist who has adopted a sensible and widely used behaviour modification technique. The tape consists of 14 separate sessions which tell people how to relax and go to sleep. The way in which he has chosen to speak the words is somewhat like the dying computer Hal in the film *2001*, and some people may find it too mannered. A useful aid to the millions who cannot sleep.

Available from Nial Reynolds, 408 London Road South, Lowestoft, NR33 0BH.

New editions

Dermatology. Current Concepts and Practices. 3rd edition. Patrick Hall-Smith and R. J. Cairns. Butterworths, London (1982). £15.00.

Iatrogenic Diseases. 2nd edition. P. F. D'Arcy and J. P. Griffiths. OUP, Oxford (1982). £25.00.

Injuries in Sport. 2nd edition. David S. Muckle. John Wright, Bristol (1982). £9.00.

An Introduction to Primary Medical Care. 2nd edition. D. C. Morrell. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh (1982). £3.25.

Manual of Primary Health Care. 2nd edition. Peter Pritchard. OUP, Oxford (1982). £6.95.

Outdoor Transport. 5th edition. Equipment for the Disabled. Oxford Regional Health Authority on behalf of the DHSS (1982). Available from Equipment for the Disabled (Dept. EU), 2 Foredown Drive, Portslade, Brighton, BN4 2BB. £3.30 plus p.&p.

A Short Textbook of Medicine. 7th edition. J. C. Houston, C. L. Joiner and J. R. Trounce. Hodder and Stoughton, London (1982). £7.95.