



THE INNER CONSULTATION

Roger Neighbour
MTP Press, Lancaster (1988)
306 pages. Price £24.95

Another book on the consultation? Yes, but this one is different in three ways. First, it is refreshingly free of conventional jargon. Secondly, it is styled on the imagery of a race with goals, check-points, safety netting, pit-stops and hand-overs. Finally, the text is organized to help the learner recognize that two heads exist on every doctor's shoulders; one that interfaces with the outer consultation and another with inner thoughts and hidden reactions.

Roger Neighbour has extensive experience and a firm grasp of existing research and development on the consultation and he reviews this in an interactional, albeit somewhat cryptic, style. This leads to some over-simplifications and distortions of original work but this matters little compared with the benefits of having an easily read overview which categorizes and clarifies existing 'models of the consultation' and encourages individual flare rather than ritual.

The book is interspersed with a variety of quotations from English and Eastern literature which, assisted by cartoons by Patrick Reade, leaven the loaf considerably. Finally, Neighbour reveals his philosophical tendencies by bringing the book to a close with 'Zen and the art of the consultation' drawing heavily on Taoist thinking with its central theme of the intrinsic rightness of the universe and man's need for harmony with the natural order.

In his foreword to this unusual book Dr Bill Styles points out that it is a practical manual for change rather than a theoretical homily and it provides the basis for us to continue learning about the consultation throughout our careers, so that each consultation can become a unique interaction between two people.

NIGEL C.H. STOTT
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JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES AND RELAX

A programme for pregnancy, labour and early parenthood (Cassette and book)

Les Brann
Thorsons, Wellingborough (1988)
48 pages. Price £6.99

The potential for hypnosis in medicine is considerable, yet it is practised by relatively few doctors. Many of these work on a private basis, perhaps because the technique can be time consuming. The idea of inducing a trance using an audiotape is appealing and the benefits to labour mentioned in the well written booklet which accompanies the tape are a reduction in pain, less need for analgesics, a shortening of labour and a greater sense of satisfaction.

However, not all patients are good hypnotic subjects. The 'presence' of the hypnotist and modification as a result of feed-

back are missing on a tape, so the number of patients in whom an initial trance can be induced must be lower. However, subsequent hypnosis may be readily induced by the tape.

Certain aspects of the tape can be criticized. The spoken part is taken too quickly, the instructions are not followed by sufficient time, much of the tape is given to the sound of waves and the author's consonants hiss, perhaps because he was too near the microphone.

Many pregnant patients would benefit greatly from hypnosis, but there are reservations about the value of this particular tape.

ALEX L. BROWN
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PREVENTION OF CORONARY HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

A workbook for primary care teams
J. Tudor Hart, B. Stilwell and J.A. Muir Gray
Faber and Faber, London (1988)
244 pages. Price £5.95

All three authors of this book are tough-minded innovators within their own disciplines. There are parts of the country where a workbook for general practice-based primary care teams would be thought to bear the same relationship to reality as a treatise on how best to groom unicorns. But these authors might just make some senior community nursing officers and family practitioner committee lay members go out and buy a unicorn curry comb.

General practitioners who pay only lip service to active preventive care should read this book, although there is a problem — it can seriously damage your prejudices. In places, of course, the authors intrude their own prejudices so some of their advice must be taken with a pinch of salt, but only a metaphorical one.

This is a review not a eulogy. I would dispute the way the authors use the term 'secondary prevention' and why they use 'counselling' when they mean persuading, but these are petty complaints. The authors set out to write a book which could inform and motivate those who work in general practice from junior receptionist to senior partner. Buy a copy for each of them.

PAUL FREELING
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CHILD HEALTH CLINICS

A handbook for doctors
Margaret Barker and Johnathan Ferrier
John Wiley, Chichester (1988)
120 pages. Price £9.95

Every general practitioner must by now be aware of the rising interest in child health clinics. With its easily readable style and