



BOOK AND VIDEO REVIEW



EARLY PREDICTION AND PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

Kevin Browne, Cliffe Davies and Peter Stratton (eds)
John Wiley, Chichester (1988)
315 pages. Price £9.50

This timely volume arose from a conference organized by the Society for Reproductive and Infant Psychology, which explains its research orientation and largely psychological frame of reference. However, many of the chapters are written by practitioners in clinical psychology, paediatrics or social work and display a strong clinical base. There are sections on prevalence and prediction, identification and prevention, and treatment in the family context, each introduced by an editorial overview, and comprising four or five research-based papers. There is an excellent author index, and the bibliographies include many 1988 references.

Child abuse has been recognized and studied in the USA for rather longer than in the UK, so the three North American contributors add depth to what is already a substantial work. The book aims to make accessible literature that otherwise would only be found in specialist journals or monographs. It will be an important resource for teachers and researchers, but also for anyone seeking to understand this complex and disturbing phenomenon.

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ANATOMY OF URBAN GENERAL PRACTICE

David Wilkin, Lesley Hallam, Ralph Leavey and David Metcalfe
Tavistock Publications, London (1987)
187 pages. Price £4.95

Although the results of the extensive research which was carried out in Manchester in the early 1980s are now well known, this book deserves to be read by all general practitioners. The main findings were the extremely wide variation in premises, referral patterns, numbers of consultations and consultation rates from practice to practice and doctor to doctor. In contrast to previous studies of health care in inner London, geographical and socioeconomic factors were not found to be a major element of the observed variation between practices. It was the personal characteristics of general practitioners which appeared to determine the way in which practices were organized and the way in which patients received care.

The relevance of this book to current debates about the future of general practice in the United Kingdom is clear. The Manchester team found no association between low list sizes and features of practice such as better access to the general practi-

tioner. Above list sizes of 2500 people the strains in providing medical care were apparent with larger lists associated with reductions in consultation rates.

The authors argue, on the basis of their data, that there are aspects of the wide variation in general practice which are not acceptable. They consider that general practitioners should be more accountable for the services they provide and they make practical recommendations about the ways in which standards in general practice can and should improve.

This book will remain an important source of information for a long time to come. It is not only a useful book of reference but is also valuable for the analysis it makes of ways in which general practice can be studied and the elements in general practice which are capable of being quantified and measured.

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RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DOCTORS

British Medical Association
BMA, London (1988)

135 pages. Price £7.95 (£6.95 to BMA members)

From time to time all doctors have to deal with non-clinical situations which require some legal knowledge for their proper resolution. This book contains answers to some of the medico-legal questions upon which the guidance of the British Medical Association has been sought. The disclosure of medical records, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Misuse of Drugs Act, health and safety at work, terrorism and doctor's responsibilities under the Mental Health Act are well covered but inevitably other topics, such as animal experiments and the implications of the Anatomy Act, are dealt with in too much detail for most doctors.

The book was published in July 1988 and includes some recent developments such as product liability, but others such as the changes in the notification of infectious diseases and the rights of employees to see medical reports about them are not mentioned, thus highlighting the admitted need for frequent revision.

There is a useful glossary, although as a former pupil of Glaister I have some difficulty with the definition of 'precognition'. The index is inappropriately placed at the beginning of the book, following the glossary and before the introduction to the book itself.

This is an inexpensive book which brings together a lot of useful information. As an authoritative brief guide to a variety of legal matters it should be in every practice and hospital department.

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