



COUNSELLING IN HIV INFECTION AND AIDS

John Green and Alana McCreaner (eds)
Blackwell, Oxford (1989)
 331 pages. Price £12.95

Green and McCreaner make it clear in their introduction that this book does not adhere to one specific 'school' of counselling and that they intend the book to be helpful to anyone (not just the trained counsellor) who is working with people infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). They have succeeded admirably in that aim, covering a wide spectrum of problems in 21 chapters. For general practitioners the first four chapters, which cover pre- and post-test counselling and medical and laboratory facts about HIV and the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), are likely to be particularly helpful. The chapter on counselling and pregnancy also sets out the difficulties in advising about HIV in pregnancy clearly.

In such a comprehensive volume, with chapters on legal and ethical aspects, paediatrics and drug abuse, it is unfortunate that the role of the general practitioner in caring for those who are infected is barely addressed. The two chapters which cover community care mention general practice only briefly and the chapter dealing with voluntary groups is irritatingly London oriented. The current medical treatment for HIV and AIDS is not explored in any depth, which is a pity, given the increasing debate about zidovudine therapy.

Overall, however, this is an excellent and up-to-date account of 'the facts' as they are currently known and the kinds of problems which present in the context of HIV and AIDS.

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AMERICAN HEALTH CARE: WHAT ARE THE LESSONS FOR BRITAIN?

Clark C. Havighurst, Robert B. Helms, Christopher Bladen and Mark V. Pauly
Institute of Economic Affairs Health Unit, London (1989)
 64 pages. Price £5.95

This slim volume contains three essays on competition in health care in the United States. All the authors are themselves American.

The essays require a reasonable familiarity with the health care system in the United States, as the nature of such things as health maintenance organizations, Medicare and Medicaid are not made explicit. Together the authors describe recent changes in the United States, the growth of health maintenance organizations, the effect of diagnostic related groups and of the application of anti-trust legislation to medicine. There is almost no attempt to examine the relevance of these changes to the British scene and the authors do not fulfil the promise of the title. None of it is easy reading and while the shortcomings of the American

scene are acknowledged they are seldom stressed.

For those with an informed special interest the book is worth reading, but it provides little assistance to those struggling to respond to *Working for patients*.

JAMES C. MCCORMICK

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A NEW DEAL FOR CARERS

Ann Richardson, Judith Unell and Beverly Aston
King's Fund, London (1989)
 95 pages. Price £4.50

Stemming from discussions with almost 200 individuals *A new deal for carers* identifies the needs of those caring for others in the community. The points outlined in the accompanying leaflet, *Carers' needs — a ten point plan for carers* (£2.50 per 100), comprehensively cover a range of topics such as the need for responsive services, information and support. Sufficient income and recognition of the difficulties that carers face are identified as other key needs. All 10 points are expanded upon in the book. Intended as a source book for a wide range of people *A new deal for carers* provokes thought about the situations carers face and how the reader may help them overcome the difficulties they experience. Current service provision, including projects developed locally and possibilities for policy development are also covered.

Addresses of national organizations and the projects mentioned in the book are provided. These include those working with various client groups such as the elderly, mentally ill, mentally handicapped, sufferers of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome and carers.

The book's major relevance for general practice lies in its recognition of the heterogeneity of carers and their common needs. With its practical emphasis it will prove useful to those interested in reassessing their own perception of carers and the support they provide.

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CHANGING THE PUBLIC HEALTH

Research Unit in Health and Behavioural Change
John Wiley, Chichester (1989)
 199 pages. Price £14.95

With the current emphasis on health promotion it is timely to have a well referenced exposition of some of the reasons for the general failure of public health. The authors critically review the historical development of the concept of health behaviour and the necessity to break free from assumptions derived from the biomedical model.

The accumulated evidence on disadvantage and disease is reviewed. Attention is drawn to the circumstances in which people live, the role of social structure in inequalities in health,