

BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN YOUNG CHILDREN

Jo Douglas
Routledge, London (1989)
 275 pages. Price £9.95

Jo Douglas clearly possesses skills and resources that are rare in the field of family guidance. This book was intended to provide a comprehensive text helping primary health care professionals to deal with emotional and behavioural problems in pre-school children.

It is a good introduction to recent research but it is not really detailed enough to stand alone; trainers will need to read it alongside more detailed paediatric textbooks and for more experienced general practitioners it will provide merely a tantalizing glimpse of what is possible without being detailed enough to allow them to put the theories into practice. The style of the book is crisp to the point of dryness. Its handbook style means that it hardly needs the summaries at the end of each chapter; these could have more usefully been replaced by lists of suggested further reading from established texts or review articles, to compliment the enormous list of references from original research. The sections of the book on developmental assessment will need revision in the light of consensus opinion published this year, and there is surprisingly no mention at all of physical or sexual abuse as a possible cause of disturbed behaviour. However, there are excellent chapters on bereavement, emotional problems and hyperactivity.

ALISON P. HILL

General practitioner, Nettlebed, South Oxfordshire

LEADING IN THE NHS — A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Rosemary Stewart
Macmillan, Basingstoke (1989)
 202 pages. Price £29.50 (hardback), £8.99 (paperback)

The National Health Service now, more than at any time since its inception, needs effective leaders and active management. It is useful then that an author with a background in academic management development should now be concentrating her expertise in the field of health.

Rosemary Stewart starts her book with the theoretical basis of leadership and progresses to strategies that are appropriate for different groups within the health service. She then describes case studies of young successful leaders that give insight into the qualities necessary for good leadership. Her final section, which must be compulsory reading for all those who aspire to leadership in any setting, emphasizes that all effective leadership starts with self-awareness and the management of self.

I was disappointed by the paucity of acknowledgement of general practice in the structure of the NHS and disconcerted by the descriptions of attempts to manage doctors. I was left feeling that doctors are a self-opinionated group who are difficult to manage and that general practitioners, because of their independent status and their resistance to change, are a problem best solved by circumnavigation. I fear this may well be a true reflection of our profession rather than a misjudgement by the author. Hopefully in the brave new world after the white paper, NHS leaders, general practitioners and other doctors will perceive and accept the benefits of cooperation and contact with others.

This is a book of the future. It is important reading for those who aspire to leadership in the NHS and essential reading for those who are now in post hoping to lead regions, districts and units through the troubled waters ahead.

PETER B. HAVELOCK

General practitioner, Wooburn Green, Bucks

CHILD CARE IN GENERAL PRACTICE (third edition)

Cyril Hart and John Bain (eds)
Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh (1989)
 486 pages. Price £29.50

Although I was one of the 52 contributors to this book, I saw nothing of the other chapters while writing my own, and I can therefore review the book objectively. Having so many contributors writing in ignorance of each other could present a major problem and it is therefore a tribute to the editors that this book works remarkably well as a whole.

General practice and paediatrics have seen many changes since the first two editions were published and this radically revised third edition is completely up to date. It is not the book for looking up unusual paediatric conditions — cri du chat syndrome and Pierre Robin anomaly do not even find a place in the index. Instead it provides practical advice and management plans for day to day practice, from immunization through child abuse, allergy and chronic disease to behavioural problems, the social services, consultation skills and self help groups.

On occasions the opinions expressed are somewhat controversial or dogmatic, for example in the section on food additives and behaviour, but on the whole the book is well referenced and authoritative. Best of all, the greater proportion of the book was written by family doctors and as a result there is no impractical theorizing. The third edition is even better than the first two editions, and they were invaluable — I can say no more.

DAVID HASLAM

General practitioner, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire

EMPLOYING STAFF (3rd edition)

Norman Ellis
British Medical Association, London (1989)
 121 pages. Price £5.95

This is a third edition, a recommendation in itself, and undoubtedly for many a welcome assurance that recent changes in employment law have been covered.

The book is modern and professional, with type and layout which is clear and uncluttered. For many years general practitioners have laboured the importance of the team approach and reception staff who reflect the image of the practice. Perhaps now, more than ever before, with the proposed changes in the National Health Service and general practice in particular, the 'right' staff, of the highest calibre will be even more important. Recruiting staff and maintaining good relations with them are most important in providing a happy, well organized practice, able to deliver a quality service to patients.

This book is a delight — a practical guide through recruitment and selection procedures with step by step instructions and examples of job descriptions and person specifications, moving on to specific legal requirements. With the guiding principles in plain English the book makes easy reading of a potentially boring subject. It will be essential for every practice, to be read through in its entirety and then kept to hand. Doctors, practice managers and other health professionals whose job includes responsibility for staff will all benefit from reading this and I would make a plea for it to be added to the reading list for general practice trainees.

MERRILL WHALEN

Practice manager, Edinburgh