

(physiological) disturbances which can produce similar syndromes, especially depression and, although psychological considerations are by no means irrelevant to the understanding of these disorders, it seems likely that the basic disturbance is patho-physiological. Finally, the effect of organic disease on mental health requires notice."

Since the largest part of general-practitioner psychiatry is concerned with cases of anxiety or depression, this concise summary of possible causes is of great value. The quotation is typical of the balanced approach of the authors to psychiatric illness. It precedes chapters with good practical advice about looking after anxious and depressed patients.

Neurosis—its understanding and management—is the most difficult subject for psychiatrists and non-psychiatrists alike. The crucial test of a textbook for non-psychiatrists is whether it makes this subject clearer or more obscure. This book makes it clearer. The authors apologize for over-simplifying, but they need not apologize.

It is doubtful if this is a book for students. It is a mistake to imagine that any textbook can cater accurately for the needs of two groups so different as general practitioners and medical students. Such a notion is based on an outmoded concept of medical education.

**Depression and its Treatment.** JOHN POLLITT, M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.M.  
London. William Heinemann Medical Books. 1965. Pp. x+114.  
Price 24s.

It would be unreasonable to ask general practitioners to read monographs on all the disorders which they see commonly. Is the subject of depression a special case? This disorder is certainly common in the community; the recognition and management of it is difficult, but it is inevitably the general practitioner's concern; it has been one of the growing points of practice in the last ten years. It is, *par excellence*, the type of whole-person disorder with a great variety of presenting symptoms which justifies the provision of primary medical care by generalists rather than by specialist teams. A monograph on this subject is by no means out of place on a general practitioner's shelf.

Dr Pollitt's book looks small but it is packed with valuable points. Most of it is easily readable. The author's approach is widely based and well balanced. He maintains a sharp distinction between 'psychological' and 'physiological' depression—two disorders with different features and different treatment. Most doctors would find it difficult to allot every depressed patient into one or other group, but the sharp distinction undoubtedly helps to clarify thought and can therefore be justified. This is the point of a textbook; if it attempted to cater for every instance, it would be unreadable.

"Patients rarely complain of being depressed". Depression is found by doctors who look for it and missed by those who are not alert to its innumerable disguises. This book illumines the search and shows why it is worth while.