

## Book reviews

**Occupational therapy in rehabilitation.** Third edition. Edited by E. M. MACDONALD, M.B.E., B.LITT., M.A.O.T., T.DIP., and others. London. Ballière, Tindall & Cassell, 1970. Pp. xv+456. Price £3 15s. (£3.75).

This is the third edition since 1960 of a textbook of rehabilitation intended primarily for occupational therapists. It is unlikely to be read by general practitioners unless they are aware of their own rôle in promoting rehabilitation and of the help they can get from and give to occupational therapy. The book is well arranged, clearly written and well illustrated. It gives form and coherence to the practice of rehabilitation, a subject which tends to be diffuse, confused by multiple interests and often given scant attention by doctors.

Throughout the very readable text it is stressed that occupational therapy must be carefully planned with the doctors concerned from an early stage of illness or injury. Referral by a doctor should give full information about history, present condition and the aims of therapy. Wherever possible, after assessment by the occupational therapist, a plan for rehabilitation should be made with practical guidance for patient and therapist. Also "patients must be encouraged to co-operate and to share responsibility for treatment". This may be difficult because, as the book says, "sometimes the patient may have been given no explanation by his doctor".

The volume is divided into six parts: the first deals with the aims, history and place in modern medicine of occupational therapy; the second sets out basic principle of treatment for physical conditions; the next three parts deal with psychiatric conditions (including the subnormal), children and geriatric patients; the final part covers domiciliary occupational therapy, industrial work, resettlement and administration.

The clear and level style, with a number of contributors, is a tribute to the principal editors, Miss Macdonald of Dorset House, Oxford and Miss MacCaul, until recently head occupational therapist at King's College Hospital. The chapter on domiciliary occupational therapy will be of special interest to general practitioners many of whom may not appreciate the importance (or even existence) of the local authority domiciliary occupational therapist. She should be a member of the health team. Her milieu in the community is social but her natural focus is medical.

This book is thoroughly recommended to any doctor who wishes to learn more of how patients

can be helped to help themselves. Selective reading will give much insight into both the philosophy and the practice of rehabilitation.

**Treatment or diagnosis.** M. BALINT, M.D., Ph.D., M.Sc. London. Tavistock Publications Limited, 1970. Pp. xviii+182. Price £2 15s. (£2.75p).

Dr Michael Balint has already established a strong claim to be the most influential single writer on general practice. Certainly in the study of the general-practitioner—patient relationship he is the acknowledged master. This is again the real subject of this book, but the vehicle is a detailed assessment of the repeat prescription situation. This previously neglected area of practice is examined by several authors including excellent chapters by Dr Marshall Marinker, and an entirely new thesis is presented. This is that such a situation represents not so much a form of treatment as perhaps a diagnosis in itself. Furthermore, patients who are in this category appear to have certain definable characteristics, such as a tendency to early marriage, a tendency to become secondarily single, and a tendency to need regular but not too intimate contact with their general practitioner.

The only possible criticism of this work is that the numbers studied are somewhat on the small side and the small but growing number of patients who need repeat prescriptions for life-long hormonal deficiency conditions, such as hypothyroidism, have not been separately considered.

Interesting data is presented to show that 2.8 per cent of patients and 6 per cent of patients over the age of 40 are now taking psychotropic drugs every day of the year. Such an incidence means that this book is relevant to all practitioners and of major importance to those specially interested in the general-practitioner—patient relationship.

Although not in the same class as the author's earlier masterpiece *The doctor. His patient and the illness*, it is short, easy to read and can be strongly recommended. In the reviewer's opinion it is one of the most important books on general practice to be published within the last year.

**Psychiatric epidemiology.** EDITED BY E. H. HARE AND J. K. WING. Published for the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust by the Oxford University Press. London, 1970. Pp. xvi+379. Price £4.

Psychiatric epidemiology may be described as the study of the relationship between mental illness and the environment. This book contains