

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

most of the papers and part of the discussions that took place at an international symposium at Aberdeen University in July 1969. The many contributors range from Finland to Philadelphia, from Geneva to Tasmania.

The volume opens with a wide-ranging view of the landscape by Professor Mechanic of Wisconsin. Psychiatry as an exact science is probably in its infancy, and one of the difficulties psychiatrists have is in standardizing their observations. For instance, Dr J. E. Cooper notes that American psychiatrists diagnose schizophrenia more frequently than do British, who in their turn diagnose affective states more than do their American colleagues. Thus, rightly, many of the papers in this book are devoted to projects for standardization of diagnosis and evaluation of methods of research.

Much of the details of this are necessarily laborious reading, but the book is well designed and printed. This volume will be of no great interest to the average family doctor, but to the psychiatrist it will give an excellent opportunity to observe the present rudimentary state of one of the growing points of psychological medicine.

Do something about that middle age. DAME ANNIS GILLIE. London and New York. Wingate-Baker. 1969. Pp. 111. Price 21s. 0d. (£1.5p).

This book is one of a series in which doctors, experienced in their own subject, help the reader to understand some common problems. Those who look on middle age as a time of special doubts and difficulties will find here much helpful advice.

The outlook of the author is immediately evident in the arrangement of the chapters for she deals first with 'fears in middle age' and ends with 'opportunities and enjoyments'. The reader is considered as a whole person. Emotional changes are explained as a possible cause of symptoms. Physical ailments are discussed with the mental adjustments they may demand.

In the very challenging chapter on 'care in middle age' emphasis is on seeking early advice for symptoms yet avoiding preoccupation with disease. Habits of eating, smoking and exercise are discussed and each reader called to review these against his particular background. Middle age can then be seen as an opportunity to seek optimum health of mind and body, to widen life's horizons and continue in conscious enjoyment of it.

In the foreword Dr G. F. Abercrombie says "it is as though, by some miracle, your own doctor had an hour to spare in conversation with you". Here, certainly, the reader feels that the author shares rather than judges all the problems. This is to be expected from one who has filled with wisdom, dignity and courage so many rôles in private and public life. Could all family doctors give such sound advice? Why should it need 'a miracle' to have a conversation with him? Perhaps doctors should be the first readers remembering that "fear of doctors is a serious hazard in these middle years".

Ten year obstetric and gynaecological clinical and educational report of Chelmsford and District Hospital Management Committee.

Mr David Brown is to be congratulated on this very short but most interesting tabular review of the obstetric results in his area in the last ten years.

Chelmsford is now famous as a centre which pays special attention to the rôle of the general-practitioner obstetrician and the layout of this pamphlet provides clear evidence of what can be achieved. For example in three general-practitioner obstetric units in the last five years the perinatal mortality rate has been 8.5/1,000, 3.5/1,000 and 2.5/1,000 total live births. Even the home confinement perinatal rate in the whole of the last ten years, a figure based on over 10,000 births, has been less than 9/1,000. Other data of interest reveal the rising pressure on consultants through a rising new consultation rate and a steadily rising rate of terminations of pregnancy.

It is sobering to reflect that even in this area the perinatal mortality rate for uncomplicated breech delivery means that more than 1 in 20 babies die and the uncorrected perinatal mortality rate is 11.5 per cent. It is a pity that these figures are not subdivided for primigravidae and multigravidae.

This most useful booklet should serve as a stimulus to obstetricians and general practitioners in many other areas.

Self aids. WENDY M. DAVIS, S.R.O.T., M.A.O.T. Edinburgh. Thistle Foundation, 22 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, EH2 4DF. 1970. Pp. 84. Price (37½p) 7s. 6d.

This booklet is a valuable contribution in the field of aids for the disabled or handicapped patient. Numerous well-drawn sketches illustrate ways in which patients can make ordinary tasks easier for themselves. Written originally for use in Edinburgh, it will be found that the addresses of shops and suppliers relate chiefly to that area. It is to be hoped that a second edition will soon appear with many more addresses. The book is remarkably good value and should be recommended to every handicapped patient.

Electronic instrumentation theory of cardiac technology. LAURENCE W. PILLER, F.S.C.T., A.M.I.T.E. London. Staples Press. 1970. Pp. 224. Price £4.50 net.

This interesting book should be studied by intensive-care-unit technicians, especially by technicians working in intensive-coronary-care units: its appeal to doctors, other than those manning such units, is more limited. The subject of medical electronics is vast and highly specialized and the non-technical reader will often find himself out of his depth.