

selective use). But if the reader is prepared to wrestle with the text a wealth of material is available to him.

H. J. WRIGHT

**The evaluation of a direct nursing attachment in a North Edinburgh practice.** MACGREGOR, S. W., HEASMAN, M. A., and KUENSSBERG, E. V. (1971). Pp. 59. Edinburgh: Scottish Home and Health Department. Price: 68p.

This study describes the effects of attaching two Queen's Nurses to a large efficiently-run group practice of 21,000 NHS patients. The work of doctors and nurses was recorded and analysed for 28 days before and 28 days after the introduction of the nurses. The attitude of patients towards the use of a nurse was also examined.

The study is of interest because it analyses all the different activities carried out by the doctors and compares the frequency of each in the 'before and after' period.

The analysis gives a useful and detailed account of how an already efficient practice used two extra pairs of hands. The authors showed that the doctor-patient contacts were slightly reduced and that the doctors delegated certain procedures, i.e. repeat visits and consultations, to the nurses.

Time studies were not carried out but the report shows clearly those areas of medical activity on which the doctors concentrated when the nurses were available. These areas of increased medical activity included: history taking; and the use of diagnostic instruments (other than stethoscope).

Interestingly enough, the number of clinical examinations was not increased. Patients as well as the doctors clearly appreciated the attachment of the nurses. Understandably the study failed to demonstrate statistically any improvements in either the doctor's efficiency or the quality of medical care. These are undefinable variables which have so far defied attempts at evaluation. The study contains much useful information and will be helpful to anyone interested in nursing attachments.

KEITH HODGKIN

**Postgraduate medicine.** DAVIES, I. J. T., (1972).

Pp. 459. London: Lloyd-Luke. Price: £4.00. In this second edition of his book Dr Davies has remedied certain omissions which were apparent in the first edition. There has been extensive revision and re-writing. New material has been added to every chapter.

Neither a students' textbook nor a comprehensive work of reference, the author has bravely aspired to a compromise type of work "intended to be read from cover to cover". He deals with the basic requirements of current postgraduate medicine—and much more. Many matters ill-understood by embryonic physicians have been selected for concise and clear explanation. The writing is simple, terse and incisive with effective use of short sentences.

In general, Dr Davies controls the problems of

choice of subject material from the corpus of knowledge with elegant eclecticism. However, one questions the wisdom of having a chapter on dermatology, particularly when this is so inferior to the rest of the book. Haematology, presently restricted to three pages on anaemia, could with profit be substituted.

There are particularly useful chapters on the laboratory diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases, medical disorders in pregnancy and drug reactions and interactions.

Short biographical footnotes enhance the reader's interest.

The book has been produced with much care and there are no major errors, but it must be pointed out that the value of rectal examination is not confined to those with abdominal pain. The references are comprehensive and helpful and there is a useful index.

This is a notable work in a new dimension and the author may be said to have achieved his object. The lucid, direct approach will make the book of value to all doctors and senior students. However, none will have greater profit than the general practitioner ten years or more out of medical school. At £4 this is a good investment for all.

D. G. ILLINGWORTH

**Nurses in an integrated health service—report of a working group appointed by the Scottish Home and Health Department (1972).** Pp. 37.

Edinburgh: H.M.S.O. Price: 32p.

In September 1971 the Scottish Home and Health Department set up a Working Group consisting of 15 nurses under the Chairmanship of Dame Muriel Powell, Chief Nursing Officer for Scotland "to consider the organisation of the nursing work in the National Health Service in Scotland in the context of the proposed reorganisation of the administrative structure of the Service".

Although the report has been prepared primarily for Scottish interests, the proposals contained therein could form a basis for discussion throughout the whole country. The emphasis is on improved patient care and it is obvious that the members of the Working Group are optimistic that integration of the health service offers a real opportunity for such improvement.

The first chapter is concerned with the purpose of the nursing service. It is encouraging to note that much importance is given to the establishment of a good supportive relationship between nurse and patient. The report next traces the growth of the team concept of nursing care both in hospital and in the community. Proposals for an administrative structure for the nursing profession are considered in detail. It is suggested that experienced nurses with considerable clinical skills, particularly in specialities, should be able to continue to use these skills and at the same time act as advisers to the administration.

The Working Group sees considerable difficulties in nurses working both in hospital and in the community at the same time, but it suggests

that nursing teams could include nurses working in both areas and that there should be free interchange. In the special fields of mental disorder, paediatrics, geriatrics and midwifery it may be useful to have some nurses working in both hospital and community. It is considered that the health visitor has an important role to play in further development of liaison between these two areas.

The authors are to be congratulated on producing such an optimistic, concise and far seeing report at a time when many members of the nursing profession appear to be concerned about their present and future roles.

D. G. GARVIE

**Out-patient facilities in health centres (1972).**

K. J. BOLDEN. Pp. 12. London: Update Publications Ltd. Price: 60p.

This pamphlet reports an investigation into the activities of some of the health centres where out-patient sessions are undertaken by visiting consultants. Twelve health centres were visited by the author and a questionnaire completed in relation to each. The report gives the answers to the questionnaire in narrative form.

The information given includes the number of medical and non-medical staff, the population serviced by each centre and the specialties in which consultant sessions are available. Some of the detailed information, such as whether or not the health centres possess a microscope, is irrelevant to the main theme.

The report demonstrates that changes have occurred since the publication of the Medical Practitioners' Union report of 1960.

One of the stated aims of the investigation was to find out the problems and difficulties involved in the provision and working of outpatient facilities and to see if lessons could be learnt for the future, but unfortunately there is little information about these aspects. The general advantages of the provision of outpatient facilities in a health centre are discussed and their haphazard development, largely dependent upon personal relationships between general practitioners, local authority staff and consultants, is emphasised.

On the whole the report is disappointing and, at 60p for 12 pages, is expensive. It would have been more valuable to have concentrated on the logistical problems, the types of clinical problem referred and the proportion who have eventually to attend hospital anyway. To have included more information about the actual advantages or disadvantages experienced by general practitioners, consultants and patients would have made it really worth while.

REFERENCE

Health Centre Report (1960). London: Medical Practitioners' Union.

H. W. K. ACHESON

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