

with the police and characteristics of areas where immigrants have congregated, have direct relevance to medical practice, as have discussion of the strains imposed by the event of immigration on individuals and whole families, including speculation on future tensions as the children of immigrants begin to abandon their original culture for that of their adopted country.

This book will be valuable to general practitioners with immigrant problems in their practice and perhaps equally valuable to paediatricians, psychiatrists, health visitors and district nurses working in these areas. In a wider sense it had educational value for all current and future medical practice in Britain. The guide to further reading and the extensive bibliography are useful and there is a valuable short list of relevant social work agencies with special knowledge and resources.

SHOLTO FORMAN

About the Illness Alcoholism (1972). KENYON, W. H. Liverpool: Merseyside Council on Alcoholism. Price: 20p.

The Merseyside Council on Alcoholism has published a re-written edition of their booklet on the illness alcoholism. The author is Mr W. H. Kenyon, who is the Executive Director of the Merseyside Council, and the foreword is by Lord Cohen of Birkenhead.

The booklet describes many aspects of alcoholism and begins with a historical review of the development of the illness in the United Kingdom and the factors which have influenced public reaction to alcoholism. Subsequent chapters describe the nature of the illness, including symptomatology and the effects which the illness has on family and community. The experience of the Council in the management and treatment of alcoholism is described and emphasis placed on the comprehensive nature of the care needed.

The functions of the general hospital, psychiatric hospital, alcoholic treatment units, out-patients, general practitioners, and alcoholics anonymous, are particularly mentioned.

There are two charts. The centre-page chart places in perspective the symptomatology of alcoholism with regard to the severity of the condition. The second chart illustrates the administrative structure of an information advisory centre and indicates those facilities which are associated with such a centre.

This booklet presents, in a concise manner, much of current thinking about alcoholism, and could well make a useful contribution to the general practitioner's understanding of the problem.

Perhaps a criticism that can be made is that the means of public and professional education regarding alcoholism are not outlined in sufficient detail.

Copies may be obtained from the Executive

Secretary, Merseyside Council on Alcoholism, B15, The Temple, Dale Street, Liverpool L2 5RU.

GARETH LLOYD

A Survey of Health Centres in the South-west (1972).

EDWARDS, J. R. Pp. 19. London: Update Publications Ltd. Price: 75p.

General practice is at once the newest and the oldest branch of medicine. Its antiquity may go back to Hippocrates, but its newness is a product of the National Health Service and the Royal College of General Practitioners. New sciences need new bases for measurement, so that it is perhaps unfair to criticise Dr Edwards' study for being unbalanced and halting.

He set out to enquire into the nature and functioning of health centres in South-west England. He visited 31 of the 35 and amassed a huge amount of data, not all of which are very clearly or sensibly presented. It would, for instance, surely have been better to compress or omit a table showing car places which takes up half of one of his 19 pages. The space gained by this and other compressions would have been better used to show plans of the centres; as it is he is obliged to describe the centres, e.g., "a relatively long corridor in the consulting suites. . . ." However, his remarks about how they are found to work in practice are good, even though without the plans the reader is hard put to it whether to agree or not. Presumably to have included plans would have made an expensive report priceless.

But the pity is the greater in that Dr Edwards' best section is that in which he comments on accommodation, and the best remark in this section is his feeling that "it is impossible to follow this line of reasoning [the Department of Health's plaintive cry that comparative data on health centres cannot be collected]. . . . From the limited individual effort . . . it is apparent that a vast amount of data on the good and bad points of many design features could be rapidly assembled and tabulated. The right questions have only to be asked and the results collected, but this could only be done by some central organisation". One can only hope that the Department, or the Royal College of General Practitioners, or the B.M.A. may be stung into activity.

"Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth" said Archimedes. Dr Edwards is one of our Archimedes, and general practice has in his report gained a small fulcrum with which to lever itself further forwards.

SIMON L. BARLEY

Health Services in a Population of 250,000.

CARSTAIRS, VERA and HOWIE, VIDA. Scottish Health Service Studies No. 24. Edinburgh: Scottish Home and Health Department.

This study is based on Government statistics, mainly for 1969, and sets out to give a picture of the health resources that exist to meet the health demands of a population of 250,000. Against this