

collect, from many different practices, brief details of a short series of patients in which electrocardiographs are arranged (using the Royal College of General Practitioners Research Unit data collection sheets).

If any of your readers would be prepared to collect these details, and are not already taking part in this survey, I should be very grateful if they would write to me, stating whether they use their own, or hospital-based apparatus.

T. C. BRADFORD

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Corse,  
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### SIMPLE DOSAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Sir,  
With reference to R. C. Gilbertson's letter (*April Journal*), your readers may be interested in the simple dosage instruction pads that we have recently made available.

I believe that an additional column for indicating "effects" offers some advantages over Dr Gilbertson's pad.

We will, of course, be delighted to supply these pads to any practitioners who may care to write to us.

D. ROBINSON

*Creative Services Executive*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Obesity and its Management** (1973). CRADDOCK, D.  
Second edition. Edinburgh and London:  
Churchill Livingstone. Price £2.50.

Treating obesity is hard work. Although it is one of the commonest conditions seen in general practice it is one that nevertheless general practitioners are sometimes loath to face and despair of treating. It is therefore particularly encouraging to have Dr Craddock's book which is an expansion of his successful M.D. thesis. He surveys the prevalence of obesity (perhaps ten per cent of adult males) with a six-to-one female/male ratio and stresses the complications and hazards that it brings. All the main forms of treatment are discussed and the emphasis is on providing individual rational treatment. He concentrates naturally on dietary control and quotes some figures that only 6.6 per cent of doctors with obesity treat themselves with drugs. Where anorectics are necessary he considers the choice lies between diethylpropion and fenfluramine and he favours the former generally, apart from special groups.

The battle against excessive weight is one that has to be fought and won in the home. It is therefore appropriate that a general practitioner should produce this book and in under 200 pages he covers the subject comprehensively.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

**Before the Age of Miracles** (1972). JOHNSTON, WILLIAM VICTOR. Pp. 212. Canada: Fitzhenry & Whiteside. Price: \$6.95.

This is the autobiography of a truly remarkable small town doctor in Canada. Born in 1897, he qualified in 1923, before insulin was available, and before any of the modern drugs had been invented. The title of his book is as excellent as the contents.

In a modest way he describes how he worked for the most part single-handed in a small town, and one is astounded at what he could do, and how in his isolation he kept abreast of contemporary medicine.

In the 1940s he had his own private blood bank, until a national system took over. He attended 1,100 confinements in his 30 years of clinical practice, with only one maternal death. One of the secrets of his great skill was the way he attended hospitals and clinics by way of postgraduate education. He visited the United States of America, Britain and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Today we all attend postgraduate courses, but when Victor Johnston was in practice this was an innovation.

The book is full of the useful kind of medicine we so rarely see in medical textbooks. Sex problems, alcoholism, and the care of the dying, these subjects are all discussed by a real expert at the job.

However, first-class medical practice was only a part of this great man's work. For three years he sat on the Council of the Canadian Medical Association, he was a director and later President of the Ontario Medical Society. The main jewel in his crown of success was to get the Canadian College of General Practitioners off the ground. He was to Canada, what John Hunt was to Britain.

This book is one every general practitioner should read. It is so well written I found it hard to put down. The older doctors will enjoy it for nostalgic reasons, the young doctors will find on these pages medical history in its most readable form. Much of what he says and did is valid today. Scientific medicine changes, but the art of management alters little.

C. A. H. WATTS