

The assessment of vocational training in general practice (1974). FREEMAN, JAMES and BYRNE, PATRICK S. Pp. 154. London: Society for Research into Higher Education. Price: £2.40.

The mind boggles at the amount of Government money that is going to be spent on training general practitioners in the future. With new vocational training schemes being approved by the College for its membership examination at the rate of two or three a month, and with the Conference of Local Medical Committees recommending the implementation of mandatory vocational training by 1977, it is clear that the number of doctors on three-year vocational training programmes is going to increase considerably in the next few years.

The Department of General Practice at the University of Manchester, led by Professor P. S. Byrne, was one of the first to identify the importance of trying to measure what educational effect, if any, is going on in vocational training schemes. The logical approach to this to measure as far as possible the knowledge, skills and attitudes of trainees at the beginning of their courses, and then again at the end.

This monograph is a report of the methods and objectives of this work which shows in passing that trainees have about the same knowledge as general practitioners many years their senior, but that their deficiencies in skills can be detected.

The educational implications of these techniques have yet to be explored, but they could well offer one way of identifying weak students and those in special need of help. This is a most valuable contribution to a subject of ever-increasing importance. Both the authors can be congratulated on identifying the subject so early, and setting up a testing system so quickly.

This is not a book that is likely to be widely read, but it is of considerable interest to those who are training in general practice, and it is a must for those who are concerned in the administration of vocational training.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

Seek Wisely to Prevent (1972). Studies of attitudes and action in a cervical cytology programme. Ed. WAKEFIELD J. London: H.M.S.O. Pp. 193. Price: £1.50.

This is a series of reports which are the result of research financed by the Department of Health and Social Security and undertaken by Mr John Wakefield, Director of the Department of Social Research, Christie Hospital, Manchester and colleagues in the Manchester area. It is particularly concerned with family doctors, what they think about cytostests, and about the attitude of women to cervical smear examinations.

Preventive examinations are an important part of the general practitioner's work, and this book discusses screening programmes from every point of view—including a small general practice. Public knowledge about cytostests, failure to respond to invitations, who carries out the test,

adequate records are all topics which are raised and considered at length. Health education in the surgery is now accepted as part of general practice and a chapter on health education highlights some important principles.

The book has well presented tables and figures, good references for each chapter, and a further reading list. General practitioners will find this a useful and stimulating book if they are interested in cervical cytology or in preventive medicine in the community. Health visitors and nurses attached to general practice, as well as social workers will find much of interest for them as well. The book can be strongly recommended.

C. HODES

British Health Centres Directory (1973). BROOKES, B. Pp. 233. London: King Edward's Hospital Fund. Price: £2.00.

This book, which is an updated and expanded version of the King's Fund working paper, *Directory of British Health Centres* (published 1971) is stated to contain "some basic information about statutory health centres in the United Kingdom." The authors hope not only that it will be useful as it stands, but also that it will be the forerunner of a more comprehensive information service on the subject.

Their first aim has been achieved. Any author writing about health centres before 1971 had to obtain information where he could, in addition to having to compile his own bibliography. The basic facts about the centres are now available in one volume, listed by county in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and by region in England. A good touch is the inclusion of specific references at the end of each section to any published work about the centres in that section. The first published *comprehensive* general bibliography, to the reviewer's knowledge, concludes the book. In view of the number of articles now appearing, these references will require annual updating.

The authors obviously had a real problem as to the information to include or exclude and rightly opted initially for a minimum, capable of future expansion. In view of this it is a pity that there is doubt about the accuracy of some of the Regional Hospital Board services listed and it is to be hoped that these will be checked more fully in future editions; consultant outpatient clinics, especially in centres some distance from the district general hospitals, could be a valuable extension of the services provided by health centres in the future.

In concluding the introduction, the authors comment on the need for evaluation. Their groundwork sets the scene for much needed papers on this topic and will save any investigator many hours at the outset.

This Directory, costing £2, is unlikely to find a place on the general practitioner's shelves, but it should be in the office of at least every community physician, family practitioner service, and area health authority, and in the libraries of the postgraduate medical centres and district general hospitals.

J. R. EDWARDS