

important that the book is closed immediately after use and kept in a dark place.

EDWARD L. MOLL

19 Railway Street,
Gillingham, Kent.

REFERENCE

Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners (1974). Editorial, **24**, 514.

EVALUATING TREATMENTS

Sir,

Dr Johnson's suggested method of evaluating treatment is of great interest. It is also intriguing that his results can be interpreted in two ways. Referring to his first table one can say, with him,

that Penicillin V was the more effective agent because nine times as many patients taking it delayed returning with a cough for six months as did those taking ampicillin. Or one can say that ampicillin was the more effective agent because nine times as many taking penicillin returned with another cough after only six months. You pay your money and you take your choice.

P. R. SOWERBY

Lavericks,
Egton,
Whitby, YO21 1TT.

REFERENCE

Johnson, R. (1974). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, **24**, 832-6.

BOOK REVIEWS

Outdoor pursuits for disabled people (1974). Croucher, N. Pp. 72. London: Disabled Living Foundation. Price: 75p.

How very difficult it is to be a good doctor. How much more difficult it is to be a good general practitioner; indeed, Professor Henry Miller would have it that we are striving for the impossible. The good doctor, after all, is the person who is approachable and who understands a patient's problems. It is the understanding which is so hard, and reading this pamphlet makes me realise what huge numbers of patients we fail to help because we have insufficient knowledge. Since so many facts batter our too scanty neurones for admission to the memory, we need some sort of intellectual sieve, which will grade facts and reduce them to a manageable minimum.

Take, for example, the problems of the disabled. In the last ten years dozens of pressure groups have worked hard to bring to everyone's attention the need for more help for the disabled. Most of us could think of at least one of these pressure groups, but how many of us can recall, at the right moment, that group which is going to help the one particular patient who is consulting us about some particular part of his daily life? How can we ensure that our thinking processes are so laterally inclined that we will not fail to tell our patient just that one fact which will help him? Solutions have been made both by patients and by doctors: the former have got together and founded their specialist associations—for diabetics, or ileostomists—and doctors have responded by specialising ("knowing more and more about less and less") and by holding special clinics in general practice; what, after all, is the antenatal clinic, but a device to ensure that we do not forget any aspect of the care of pregnancy?

General practitioners who want to be good will therefore insert this excellent pamphlet into some level of their mental sieve. At the coarsest level, they need remember only that it is possible for the

disabled to enjoy outdoor pursuits; at this level is also the knowledge that there is such a thing as the Disabled Living Foundation. In more detail, they may remember that the pamphlet lists 28 different pursuits which the disabled can follow, or, going further, that differing disabilities have their different separate recreational organisations, all fully listed here. Further on again, they may want to remember that even the unlikeliest sports are open to the disabled—water skiing for the one-legged, angling for those in wheelchairs, sailing for spastics and even, we are assured, gliding for the blind and deaf!

But only one fact need really be remembered: the name and address of the Disabled Living Foundation, which should be as important for every disabled person as that of his general practitioner: 364 Kensington High Street, London W14 8NS.

S. L. BARLEY

The eye in general practice (1972). JACKSON, C. R. S., Sixth edition. Edinburgh & London: Churchill Livingstone. Price: £2.

This is a very good book. Mr Jackson has aimed clearly and deliberately at general practice and has covered the ground in 66 pages. As a result the chapters are short and clearly laid out. The book can be read through quite easily and at the same time it is quite easy to refer to particular topics quickly.

It would be helpful if in the next edition the author could give incidence figures of all the main conditions that he describes. It is a tribute to this book that it has achieved six editions in 15 years. In the words of our reviewer of a previous edition 'this is an easily read small book that will be of invaluable help to the general practitioner in his daily work. The author, has, in the past, been in general practice himself and is aware of the difficulties that beset the busy general practitioner'.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY