

attempting to collect facts about group practice in the United Kingdom on behalf of the Scientific Committee of the Congress. It appears that, in the United Kingdom, this form of practice is confined to general practitioners. In many other countries there are groups of specialists and also groups of specialists and general practitioners working together.

I would be most grateful if any doctor in Britain who practises in such a group or who has knowledge of one would send me the facts.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Smoking Problem and the Family Doctor** (1975). Proceedings of a joint symposium sponsored by the Scottish Council of the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Scottish Committee for ASH: November 1943. 59 Pp. Edinburgh: Scottish Health Education Unit.

Most doctors in the College were not at this symposium; and most will welcome the simple way in which these proceedings have been prepared for the absentees. Many facts, a few opinions and much discussion on the burning topic in preventive medicine: Why stop? Who stops? Who can't stop? Stop or cut down? Is anything "safe"?

Some of the matters discussed in detail are: the long-term damage to fetal development; the identification of vulnerable children in vulnerable households with respiratory disease; the potential "coronary" victim; the role of nicotine, tar and CO; hypnotherapy in the surgery; the problems of the medical nicotine addict; and is health education failing?

An encouraging feature is the number of family doctors in Scotland who are studying the problem in their own practices. In part this too may be, as the report itself is, a tribute to the energies and skill of the late Dr Ian Stokoe who contributed so much to the success of the symposium held at the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.

G. I. WATSON

**Bedside Diagnosis** (1974). Tenth edition. SEWARD, C. assisted by MATTINGLY, D. Pp. 548. London: Churchill Livingstone. Price: £4.00.

The tenth edition marks the twenty-fifth year since first publication. The entire text has been revised and some chapters have been wholly rewritten. A formidable gathering of experts has supervised and contributed. Considerable thought has been given to the theme of doctor-created illness and the side-effects of treatment. Advances in therapy and in the mode of action of drugs are looked at afresh. There is a new chapter on the causes of coma.

Those who know the book's format will be aware that it is intended to be complementary to the formal text book, linking such traditional publications with the patient's bedside. The

basic structure is that of a systematic analysis of important symptoms and signs. Such a method is appealing because one's problems are often not so much of 'knowing', but are rather those of difficulty in recalling one's knowledge in an orderly fashion. Conversely, however, the design of the book produces problems of rigidity and of artificiality, for example, the subject of hypertension is covered in the section entitled *Head Pain*. Furthermore, the tone of the book is inevitably didactic and the prose style staccato.

There are several printing errors, but the typescript is clear. There are a few other faults of commission and omission. The expression "coronary infarction" is irksome and it is surprising to find constipation regarded as a cause of headache. I am also reluctant to accept aerophagy and irritable colon as causes of thoracic pain. The author's view on faecal occult blood tests are dangerously wrong. And why is there no section on lumbar pain?

The overall impression is however, of real achievement, and a wealth of medical wisdom is contained in this little volume. It gives the feeling of possessing the distillate of several lifetimes' experience.

Beautifully produced, *Bedside Diagnosis* is a pocket supermarket in facts for the candidate and the working clinician. It is regrettable that such a book didn't come from general practice.

"Good gear goes in small bulk"—and for only £4.00.

DAVID G. ILLINGWORTH

**A Guide to Counselling and Basic Psychotherapy** (1975). RICHARD PARRY. Pp. 129. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. Price £1.75.

As a description of the way in which one man finds he can help some people to resolve some of their difficulties with people, this book is appropriate reading for all general practitioners. As a way of acquiring the personal skill of psychotherapy (or counselling—the author uses the words synonymously) this book could only contribute to the background reading. Those who start a book at chapter one, are advised to read the author's preface carefully, otherwise the authority of the printed word causes personal assertions to look like cast-iron universal rules.