

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.

For example, not everyone will agree with the statement "A session which lasts for less than 30 minutes scarcely has the opportunity of beginning before time has come for it to finish."

I found the chapters *Patients with difficult problems* and *Problems with difficult patients*, thought-provoking and particularly helpful, although discussion earlier in the book about the selection of patients, produced in me the unfair reaction "It's alright for some—we have to cope with everyone."

There is a strong feeling of commonsense, which other doctors often claim is deficient in psychotherapists, running through this book which is typified for me by the cardinal principle from the final chapter on termination "When all is finished take care of the conscious and leave the unconscious to take care of itself."

I believe that an understanding of the techniques described in this book, and an ability to modify them appropriately to the consultation in general practice, is essential if general practitioners are to be able to form diagnoses simultaneously in physical, psychological, and social terms.

There are other books about the use of those psychotherapeutic techniques particularly suitable to general practice which are more important to general practitioners.

R. HILLMAN

**General Practice for Students of Medicine** (1975).  
R. HARVARD DAVIS. London: Academic Press. Price: £2.20.

General practice has been introduced into the clinical curriculum of most medical schools, but

the literature on this subject has been aimed at postgraduate study and the vocational trainee.

This slim paperbacked book is one of a new series of monographs for students of medicine. The author is in charge of the General Practice Unit of the Welsh National School of Medicine and so is well qualified to write an introductory book on the topic of family medicine. He has succeeded so well that this book will be of value to vocational trainees as well as undergraduates.

The first half of the book deals with the principles involved in the delivery of medical care with an outline of the way in which this care is financed; it then deals with the development of the health service as it affects the general practitioner.

While this is the logical way to approach a subject as vast as primary care, I feel that much of the information in this half of the book will be of most value to the vocational trainee and I hope that the undergraduate will not be too daunted by it.

The second half of the book deals in outline with the more clinical aspects of general practice and the consultation. The author also covers medical care in other countries and the structure of reorganisation of the health service. In fact, there will be many family doctors who might find the clear diagrams in this latter chapter of help in showing what has happened to the administration since the advent of such abbreviations as AHA and DMT!

This book can unreservedly be recommended to any student of primary medical care and should find a place on the shelves of every medical school library.

K. J. BOLDEN