

**Prevention and Health—Everybody's Business** (1976). Department of Health and Social Security. Pp. 96. London: H.M.S.O. Price: 50p.

In these troubled times the debate on the problem of equating apparently unlimited demand for public and personal health with limited resources is assuming frenzied proportions.

One question which is constantly being asked is not only where we can get further resources, but what are we doing with our current resources and are we making proper and efficient use of them. It was only natural then for the Department of Health and Social Security to produce a consultative document on prevention and health in an attempt to reappraise, in the light of our current knowledge of disease, the various ways in which we can all take more responsibility for insuring our own health.

In 96 pages this excellent little book traces medicine and epidemiology through the ages from Victorian Britain to the present day. It highlights the success stories of the past—the control of infectious diseases, maternal mortality, and haemolytic disease of the newborn. It brings into focus the problems of today and tomorrow such as smoking, alcohol, drugs, leisure, and especially the health problems of the aged. Both the sections on the practical measures which can be taken in an attempt to control disease, and the one on cost-benefit and screening are written in an easy dialogue which transforms dry, unintelligible subjects into statements which can be understood by all of us.

The last section brings the document together. We all have a part to play, and if we can change the direction at present being followed by the National Health Service mark one where resource and demand are becoming more and more diverse, then we just might create the conditions for a National Health Service mark two where our needs are fully met by our resources.

This is an essential booklet for all of us to read. The Royal College of General Practitioners especially has a golden opportunity in the light of this consultative document to reassess the strategy of public and personal health for the future. Time is running out. The answers to the questions posed in this book must be found soon.

A. W. PRINCE

**General practitioners, Health Visitors and the Prevention of Crime** (1976). Chichester: Barry Rose. Pp. 24. Price: 50p.

NACRO are to be congratulated on calling together a day conference last May with the help of the British Medical Association and the

Health Visitors' Association to consider the role in crime prevention of two classes of society who traditionally never think of themselves in this role at all.

If one thinks of much stealing as a protest, this whole study was worthwhile. A well-known policeman in Wolverhampton once said "Thank God for thieves". A case of theft brought before the Courts is so often the means of a whole web of family disorder being brought to light.

It was clearly a useful study day and the only sad point that comes out of it is that the health visitor is having to play so many aspects of the role of a social worker. This of course has been increasingly apparent since the Seebom disaster and it is clearly the job of the general practitioner and the health visitor to get on with the task in front of them. This not very readable account of a conference (and what conference reports really do make good reading?) was very well worth producing if only for its title. I have been a Justice of the Peace now for 17 years and have seen the prevention of crime as part of the duty of every citizen. Now I see that my health visitor and I have probably got more to give to this field than we used to think. I am encouraging my friends on the Bench and in the Probation Service to buy copies.

J. F. FISHER

**Modern first aid** (1973). PLAYFAIR, A. S. Pp. 159. London: Hamlyn. Price: 50p.

This pocket-sized book is not only a useful adjunct to the official manual of the St John Ambulance Association, St Andrew's Ambulance Association, and the British Red Cross Society, it is well suited to home study and practice.

Dr Playfair gives reasons for the first aid procedures; the format is readable and clear; the coloured illustrations by Edward Osmond are excellent.

Doctors and medical students as well as the public should read this little book.

RICHARD GRAY

**Data Sheet Compendium** (1976). London: The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, 162 Regent Street, London. Supplied free to all registered practitioners.

The new edition of this useful book is once again larger and therefore more welcome. It would be very little bigger, but much more welcome, if the compilers went to the slight extra amount of trouble to include cross reference lists of proprietary/generic and generic/proprietary drug names.

S. L. BARLEY