

general practitioner should be seen to be preoccupied with organic disease in children to the exclusion of much else that is of major practical importance.

H. J. WRIGHT

References

- Court Committee on Child Health Services (1976). *Fit for the Future*. London: HMSO.
- White Franklin, A. (1976). *Widening Horizons of Child Health*. Lancaster: Medical and Technical Publishers.

THE ROLE OF MEDICINE. DREAM, MIRAGE OR NEMESIS

Thomas McKeown

Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, London (1976)

80 pages. Price £3.25

I once had the pleasure of sitting next to Professor McKeown at dinner. We played a game in which I was invited to judge whether any given epigram was an original "McKeown" or emanated from some other distinguished source. I was not very good at it but am delighted to report that Professor McKeown has lost none of his skill in fashioning epigrams of which the following is an example: "Our habits begin as pleasures of which we have no need and end as necessities in which we have no pleasure."

The Role of Medicine, the happy result of a Rock Carling Fellowship, is in two parts. The first part restates the arguments which persuade Professor McKeown that the main determinants of the improvement in health in the western world have been nutritional, environmental, and behavioural, in that order, and that the contributions of preventive and curative medicine have been slight. In the second part he discusses the future role of medicine in the western world and suggests that the major determinants will be behavioural, environmental, and nutritional, in that order.

With the sole exception of epidemiology he sees the contribution of orthodox medicine as continuing to be important, particularly in respect of care and the quality of life, but making little impact on health. He renews his plea for a diminution of the distortions produced by teaching centres, and for the integration of psychiatric services, the care of the mentally handicapped, and the aged. This second part deserves wide readership and should stimulate an overdue reappraisal of the role of the general practitioner.

Professor McKeown's views have not hitherto received the attention they deserve from the profession as a whole, and his earlier design for primary care, based on some degree of specialization, has never received support. Nonetheless, his major thesis deserves critical and careful examination and this monograph should be widely read.

J. S. MC CORMICK

TRAINING FOR GENERAL PRACTICE IN 1976

Council for Postgraduate Medical Education in England & Wales

Available from 7 Marylebone Road, Park Crescent, London NW1 5HA

16 pages. Price 30p

The Council for Postgraduate Medical Education in England and Wales can be congratulated on producing a new up-to-date booklet on training for general practice in 1976.

With a record number of trainers already appointed, and with the number of trainees entering practice increasing all the time, there is a continual need for clear guidance for trainees whose careers are going to be affected, and for established principals who are interested in becoming trainers.

This little booklet brings together in only 16 pages much useful information and offers rather clearer guidance for the selection of teachers in general practice than has been available before.

In particular, it suggests that attendance at a course for trainers before appointment and a commitment to attend such courses regularly after appointment should be one criterion, and a "commitment to take part in ongoing local teachers' groups and courses recommended by the regional postgraduate committee" should be another.

Under the general heading of "Ability to Teach", "willingness to submit to assessment of ability as a teacher" and "awareness of the educational aims of vocational training for general practitioners" are two of the criteria given.

For the first time an experience factor of three years in general practice as a principal is laid down and the booklet ends with an interesting graph showing how the time spent between full registration and the date of becoming an unrestricted principal has changed considerably in the years 1969 to 1974.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Donald Hicks

HMSO, London (1976)

629 pages. Price £9.50

The author of this book is a chemical engineer and is a consultant to the Department of Health and Social Security on the application of operational research to Health Service problems. In 1973 he was commissioned to survey the literature of general practice with the object of promoting studies by operational researchers into primary medical care. Subsequently the DHSS decided to publish the review for a wider circulation, particularly for those who are, or will be, engaged in NHS administration.

Mr Hicks reviews and quotes extensively from over 400 books and papers. Much is largely of historical interest: for example, ten pages are devoted to a descriptive analysis of the First National Morbidity Survey, carried out over 20 years ago (although 18 pages are devoted to the second survey carried out in 1970/71).

There are chapters on the role of the general practitioner, the measurement of good and bad health, and the organization of primary health care. The most valuable part of the book for the research orientated general practitioner is a series of chapters describing, with extensive quotations, many of the morbidity surveys carried out, both by government departments and individuals, over the past 20 years. The author examines the role of health visitors (he seems doubtful of their necessity), home nurses, and social workers in general practice. Mental illness at the primary care level, and the health of the school child are dealt with in depth. Mr Hicks recognizes (and demonstrates) the difficulty the layman has in examining the literature of mental illness. As has happened elsewhere, the chapter on the "Health of the School Child" suffers from "waiting for Court".

Many of the papers are well known and it is unlikely that many general practitioners will want to purchase this book. However, as a guide to past publications relevant to many aspects of general practice, and particularly by virtue of its long quotations from published and unpublished government reports, it may have a place on the shelves of the local postgraduate library, where it is likely to be consulted more often than in the offices of the NHS administrators to whom it has been sent freely. Those wishing to refer to recently published work would be

Book Reviews

well advised to consider the series of bibliographies prepared by Miss Hammond, the college librarian, on "Research Projects by General Practitioners".

D. G. GARVIE

AN INTRODUCTION TO PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE

D. C. Morrell

Churchill Livingstone,
Edinburgh (1976)

138 pages. Price £1.95

In recent years the increase of academic departments of general practice has been matched by the increase in academic general-practice textbooks, so one sometimes doubts their relevance and usefulness to those engaged in general practice. Happily, when the book is by David Morrell, Wolfson Professor of General Practice, St Thomas' Hospital Medical School, such doubts soon disappear, for he has consistently used his experience to describe and illuminate the teaching points he makes.

In his view, training for primary medical care is now more of an academic discipline based on epidemiological investigation which uses the concept of probability as an essential working tool: basic individual experience alone is no longer enough. While he does not go as far as Sackett at McMaster University, for example, he uses continuing basic research into and about his practice for results which illustrate the special needs of trainees. Such needs include the basic one of promoting skills in communication, and learning and using special skills developed by the general practitioner in examination, diagnosis, and prognosis. The short chapter on treatment points out good working principles.

Morrell's phrasing is clear, concise, and a pleasure to read. For example, "... rarely can an illness be regarded as a clear-cut entity . . . it is a deviation from the normal produced by a number of factors acting over a period of time and with implications which reach outside the individual concerned." The book is well produced and easy to read; tables are clear and explicit, as are the illustrative individual case notes. Yet conciseness has its disadvantages: "excessive nutrition" (page 86) and "many people who died in youth or early adult life now go on to old age" (page 125) both need rephrasing. Surprisingly no mention is made of the value of the radiologist in domiciliary consultation after describing the value of the pathologist: is this a reflection of Morrell's

own experience?

The book is stimulating and is full of interest. Undergraduates faced with the mysteries of general practice will find practical help in it. Postgraduate trainees, for whom it is intended, will rarely invest their money more wisely; and experienced general practitioners, especially trainers, might well follow their example with similar advantage.

TEVIOT EIMERL

A SHORT TEXTBOOK OF PSYCHIATRY. 2ND EDITION

W. L. Linford Rees

Hodder and Stoughton Unibooks,
London (1976)

332 pages. Price £2.26

Professor Linford Rees's book is not a general practitioner's guide to practical psychiatry in the consulting room, nor to the doctor/patient relationship. He presents a cross-sectional view of selected psychiatric disorders with little emphasis on the longitudinal aspects of disease.

The first 93 pages are devoted to behavioural science. Psychology and the theories of intelligence, learning, personality, and perception are covered in a necessarily brief but unfortunately disconnected way. The differing schools of psychological thinking are there but in a most confusing mixture. The briefness of the text leads to oversimplification and sometimes loss of meaning.

On the credit side, the second part of the book, which deals with psychiatry, covers all aspects from the psychiatric examination of the patient through schizophrenia, sexual disorders, and child psychiatry to behaviour therapy and psychopharmacology. One of the stated aims is to include every aspect but this is for the sake of completeness and does not give a rounded view of the aspects of disease that are covered.

While the index is poor, the suggested references at the end of each chapter are helpful. They include readable Penguin paperbacks as well as more standard textbooks and thus provide a sound source for further reading.

The book itself probably does achieve one of its stated aims, which is to review the phenomena of psychiatric illness and the present state of knowledge about their aetiology. It may therefore be a useful book to read in order to pass an examination. However, it did not convey to me much feeling for the subject and thus falls short of the expectation that it should excite the reader's interest and convey the

author's enthusiasm for his subject.

The new sections in this second edition include one on psychiatric emergencies. Several chapters of the first edition have been updated.

M. J. Y. FISHER

DISPUTATION CONCERNING THE MOVEMENT OF THE HEART AND BLOOD IN LIVING CREATURES

William Harvey. Translated by
Gweneth Whitteridge

Blackwell Scientific,
London (1977)

142 pages. Price £4.75 (paperback)

Medical historians, logicians, and Latinists will study this new translation of Harvey's *De Motu Cordis* with considerable reward, but it is doubtful whether any doctor without any interest in at least one of these subjects will really want to know.

Had Harvey done his work in the 20th century, he would have condensed the whole into a paper of some 2,000 words, found an obliging editor, and that would have been that. Not so, however, in the 17th century. The only accepted method then was the disputation, conducted strictly according to the laws of logic and argument, with the whole subject teased out to the last strand—and in Latin. Aunt Sallys were put up only to be shied down; hypotheses abounded and suffered the same fate; earlier authorities were quoted with almost sycophantic respect and then politely but remorselessly clobbered until only the disputant's theory remained standing. A cumbersome method, but the literature is much enriched thereby.

In a long and scholarly introduction the author leads the amateur kindly and firmly through the academic groves in which she is clearly so much at home, pointing out such objects of interest as the difference between the pluperfect subjunctive and the pluperfect indicative, and the many possible translations of the word *nervus*. All good clean academic fun, but one must have retained at least some shreds of Latinity to be able to join in.

This work should be in every medical library as a reference book, for it will almost certainly supersede its predecessors as the standard work. The author's introduction is enlightening and the text is well annotated, and as a work of reference its price is by no means out of the way; but I think its popular appeal will be small.

JOHN MILES