

References

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- Montague, A. (1963). *Journal of the American Medical Association*, **183**, 577.

UNWANTED PREGNANCY AND COUNSELLING

Juliet Cheetham

Routledge and Keegan Paul
London, Henley, and Boston (1977)
234 pages. Price £4.95

As an undergraduate I had little awareness of the feelings of the patients with whom I worked, I was so busy trying to maintain my professional image. However, during my first six months in general practice I was able to acknowledge a patient's feelings and became aware during antenatal clinics that not all mothers welcomed pregnancy and that some, although physically well, were very unhappy. Using the pattern of doctoring I had been taught, I tried to cure these feelings of unhappiness. This was unsuccessful and for a time made me less responsive to the feelings expressed by pregnant women.

I feel that this book might have been helpful to me as a clinical student or a trainee general practitioner, and I can also recommend it to those who teach general practice.

The first part puts pregnancy in the context of life outside the surgery and examines people's attitudes and beliefs about pregnancy and motherhood. It is not easy to read, but is just worth the effort. The middle part examines ways of helping pregnant women, covering financial aspects, contraception, and abortion. The third part is well written and, with good examples, looks particularly at counselling. It may be helpful to doctors trying to cope with women who have problems with their pregnancies.

M. F. HASENFUSS

A PRACTICE OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

G. Chamberlain and C. J. Dewhurst

Pitman Medical,
Tunbridge Wells (1977)
271 pages. Price £6

The old D.OBST.RCOG has lost its OBST. and now includes gynaecology as part of the examination. It is therefore appropriate that a book aimed at

general practitioners and designed to help diploma candidates has been written by the President and a senior member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, both members of the staff of Queen Charlotte's Hospital for Women. Its field is limited as it must be if obstetrics and gynaecology are to be compressed into less than 300 pages. As deliveries are more and more in the hands of specialists at hospital centres, the authors see the role of general practitioners as mainly providing antenatal and postnatal care and contraception. Special obstetric techniques such as forceps delivery and surgical induction are not described in detail, and the main theme, repeated almost to the point of nausea, is early referral to a specialist.

As the book is likely to become a guide essential to the diploma candidate it is disappointing to discover, as early as page five, that he is advised when carrying out an immunological pregnancy test first to mix sensitized cells and antigonadotrophic serum, then add the urine, thereby ensuring a negative every time and reducing his obstetric practice to nil.

Equally disconcerting is the literary style which is curate's egg: in parts old-fashioned English, elsewhere modern style in which doctors, domestic upheavals and cervical dilatation are 'involved' and hypovolaemic situations 'treated'; singular nouns are coupled with plural verbs, sentences end in prepositions, the plural forms of primigravida and multipara are used, and labia used in the singular; spontaneous version is 'accomplished', doctors 'do' obstetrics and the Apgar figure is, of course, 'computed'. Usually, however, we know what the authors mean even when they do not express themselves exactly: "... anti-D gamma globulin given to protect her against future more useful pregnancies" or "The mass may be picked up by the patient herself while washing or during an incidental examination by her doctor".

It is to be hoped that the authors will revise the book because it does contain a great deal of information useful to the general practitioner in a form easily absorbed if the language is overlooked. For practical advice on obstetrics it does not yet compete with David Brown's *Obstetrics, Contraception and Gynaecology*, but it deals more thoroughly with gynaecology, to which it devotes 40 per cent of its space, and is especially good on the intrauterine contraceptive device.

The two books, both from Pitman Medical, are approximately equal in content, but Chamberlain and Dewhurst have the advantage of larger print, requiring more pages. Much of the

space is taken up by 88 sketches (two numbered 14.1) and 15 tables. Brown, who has 15 sketches and one table, relies more on words and uses them more skilfully. Read Brown for dogmatic practical advice, especially on obstetrics; know Chamberlain and Dewhurst to pass the examination. Better still, if time permits, put off the examination until their next edition is published!

M. I. COOKSON

Reference

- Brown, D. (1976). *Obstetrics, Contraception and Gynaecology*. London: Pitman.

MASTECTOMY—A PATIENT'S GUIDE TO COPING WITH BREAST SURGERY

Nancy Robinson and Ian Swash

Thorsons, Wellingborough (1977)
128 pages. Price £2.50

I have learnt a great deal from this book for I am ashamed to say I had no idea of the wide range of appliances and help available through the Mastectomy Association.

The book is intensely practical, down to earth and full of commonsense advice. The thoughtfulness of the authors is expressed, for example, in the advice they give to a woman about to be admitted for mastectomy to take with her to hospital a supply of small safety pins, large handkerchiefs and a silk scarf, so that she can experiment with breast forms before a more permanent prosthesis is fitted after her operation.

The main part of the book deals with prostheses, corsets and swimwear. The authors are aware not only of the younger woman's cosmetic needs but also those of the older woman—a welcome view in an age of youth cult, when very little thought is given to the menopausal or postmenopausal woman's need for help with her appearance.

The psychological adjustment to the loss of breast is discussed with tact and empathy, and much thought has been given to the involvement of husbands, children and friends in helping them to understand a woman's fears and difficulties.

Simple physiotherapy, exercises, driving a car with a manual rather than automatic transmission and even advice on crocheting or knitting are included in the list of useful hints.

A good section on self-examination of the breast is included, and the illustrations are excellent.

The book was written not only for the