

References

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**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

NHS market but for North American and Antipodean women. There is a full list of manufacturers and corsetieres, as well as a good reading list.

I would have liked to see a little more discussion of sexual adjustment, not only from the point of view of men but also of women. My only real quarrel with the authors is the use of the term 'mastectomee'.

I think that general practitioners, including myself, can help their women patients considerably by recommending this book.

K. E. SCHÖPFLIN

## ACCIDENTS IN THE HOME

Sandra Burman and  
Hazel Genn (eds)

Croom Helm Limited  
London (1977)

140 pages. Price £5.95

Accidents in the home really are a blind spot to most of us in general practice, which is remarkable when we consider how many patients we see and how many letters pass through our files as a result of them. Despite the front-page publicity devoted to road accidents, accidents at home attract little attention although they cause as many deaths.

This book consists of a series of chapters on different aspects of accidents in the home and brings together useful information. It is estimated that in 1975 6,463 people died as a result of domestic accidents, about 100,000 were admitted to hospital because of their injuries, and about two million people were involved in accidents in the home which resulted in minor injuries.

The Department of Prices and Consumer Protection seems to be the government department primarily concerned with home accidents, which is not what I had expected. It is disappointing to see that much of the research depends on rather poor information derived from accident and emergency departments and that very little has been produced from general practice.

The evidence in favour of accident-prone individuals and behavioural and particularly relationship factors being associated with home accidents is interesting. It is a challenge for general practice now to begin to use this information to start devising ways of reducing injuries and deaths.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

## TRAINING IN GENERAL PRACTICE

Scottish Council for Postgraduate  
Medical Education  
Edinburgh (1977)

22 pages. No price given

The Scottish Council for Postgraduate Medical Education has recently published a booklet written by Dr Alastair G. Donald, Adviser in General Practice for the South-Eastern Region of Scotland and Vice-Chairman of the Council of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

This booklet is similar and complementary to that issued by the Central Council for Postgraduate Medical Education in England and Wales which we reviewed in the August issue of the *Journal* (p. 508). It is, however, set in an educational rather than an administrative mould and underlines the educational process throughout.

The documents described apply only to Scotland and will therefore not be helpful to English readers. However, the booklet is well worth reading by all trainers and trainees throughout the UK because it does set out more clearly than before the precise requirements which should, where possible, be met in every teaching practice. Two of the criteria are a commonroom and an age-sex register.

It is encouraging to read that "every family practice should be equipped with a small library and some current medical journals". The importance of terminal assessment by trainees taking the MRCGP examination is also stressed.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

## COMMON SYMPTOMS OF DISEASE IN CHILDREN. 5TH EDITION

R. S. Illingworth

Blackwell Scientific Publications  
Oxford (1975)

375 pages. Price £5.50

Dr Illingworth, Professor of Child Health at the University of Sheffield, is a well-known author of several books on paediatrics and this, one of his best known, has now reached the fifth edition. There are only 54 additional pages, yet the price has risen from £3.50—a sign of the times. It speaks well for its popularity that it has been translated into Spanish, Greek, Italian, and Dutch.

For those who come to it for the first time, Professor Illingworth has done a

service to all who care for children by giving us a 'French' (French's *Index of Differential Diagnosis*) of paediatrics which is extremely useful for newly qualified doctors faced with the differential diagnosis of a child with a problem sitting on his mother's knee in the consulting room.

Among the new symptoms which have been added are: swelling of the face and scrotum; pain in the face; retention of urine; oliguria; indistinct speech; and several skin rashes. At the end of the book there is a list of the adverse effects of many drugs, which comes as a timely reminder of this important cause of illness in children.

When the fourth edition was published, I reviewed it in *Update* (Pollak, 1974a) and Professor Illingworth and I had a correspondence which was published in the same journal (Illingworth, 1974; Pollak, 1974b). At that time I suggested that Professor Illingworth, as one might expect, took the view of a hospital paediatrician and that certain symptoms, for example, otitis media, gastroenteritis, wheeziness, and febrile fits looked rather different when viewed from outside hospital. I also suggested that intelligent doctors liked to know what happened to their patients rather than simply to be told that they should be referred to a specialist. While there has been, here and there, a slight adjustment to a sentence, the main text is unchanged, so that my original criticism still stands.

At the time, I noted that such a book should have been written from general practice and I regretted that no such book existed. I am glad to say that now such a rival has appeared, written by a practising family doctor. Dr Stuart Carne's book (1977) goes a long way to cover the same ground, although it is not presented in the same way, nor is it concerned solely with diagnosis. It is, however, able to present the problems from the general practitioner's point of view. I hope that it will be widely read, since it is so important for the future health of general practice that subjects such as common symptoms in children are taught by the masters of the common symptom—our most highly skilled and experienced family doctors.

MARGARET POLLAK

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