

THE CONSULTATION

Sir,
I always find it difficult to squeeze my perceptions of human behaviour into somebody else's pint pot. Dr H. J. Wright's article (*July Journal*, p. 400) is no exception. I found it thought-provoking but inadequate "for use in day-to-day clinical general practice", certainly with many of the patients who live in my area.

His classification appears to omit any mention of subconscious motivation. It works fairly satisfactorily in explaining how psychologically 'straightforward' patients behave, but when it comes to neurotics and 'game-players' it falls down badly. It must have this extra dimension.

For the psychologically straightforward each consultation is certainly critical in the conscious journey in and out of illness. For neurotics and game-

players I see the consultation as a much more incidental occurrence in an endlessly repeated process of self-justification and 'ego-maintenance'.

Perhaps Dr Wright should return to the drawing board and construct a rather less naïve and more powerful model?

TIM PAINE

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CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Sir,
As you know, the Royal College of General Practitioners was founded more than 25 years ago. The

headquarters moved to the present site in 1964. During the last 14 years the building has been in constant use by general practitioners from the UK and overseas for conferences and exchanges of ideas to improve not only the NHS but world-wide family care. Now it is in need of redecorating.

The Provosts' wives of the Metropolitan faculties have decided to hold a Christmas Fayre on Saturday, 25 November from 11.00 to 15.30 hours at number 14 Princes Gate to help raise the necessary funds for redecoration.

Any of your readers who are in London on this date are warmly invited to attend.

MARY PRICE
Organizer

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Ham
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Surrey.

BOOK REVIEWS

INFANT FEEDING 1975: ATTITUDES AND PRACTICE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Jean Martin

HMSO
London (1978)
173 pages. Price £7

To breast feed or not to breast feed has for a long time been a question that the medical profession answers with an unequivocal affirmative. Yet breast feeding mothers remain in a minority. Jean Martin, an unknown author (unfortunately no information is given about her) attempts to discover why this is so in a survey carried out on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Security. She has carried out her task in a thoroughly professional manner and has produced some interesting and useful findings.

At six weeks, only 24 per cent of babies in the survey were still breast fed, although 51 per cent were put to the breast initially. At four months the proportion had fallen to 13 per cent, despite current recommendations that mothers should breast feed for this length of time and delay starting solid foods until the baby is at least four months old. The method of feeding subsequent babies tended to follow the pattern adopted with the first baby. She arrives at the sensible conclusion that every effort must be made to get breast feeding right the first time.

Two independent attitudes were identified which seem likely to predict which method of feeding mothers will choose. The first, "distaste for breast feeding", may be associated with a woman's attitude to her breasts and to her sexuality, and is unlikely to be amenable to change in adult life. The second, called "breast feeding is best for the baby", is considered to be more susceptible to health education during pregnancy. However, it appears that antenatal clinic staff generally failed to provide information regarding relative merits of breast and bottle feeding.

One of the most interesting findings was that a delay in starting breast feeding of more than four hours had a positive association with early stopping.

This is a comprehensive survey, but while some of the results are of interest to all who come into contact with mothers and babies, much of the detail will appeal to a more specialized readership.

G. R. FREEDMAN

ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES. 2ND EDITION

R. H. Hardy

Oxford University Press
(1978)

108 pages. Price £2.50

This book is short and to the point. It is written in a practical style with numer-

ous touches of wry humour. The author, who is now Senior Casualty Officer at the Hereford General Hospital, is also an experienced general practitioner and this is evident from his text. Among the handbooks currently available for managing accidents this book is probably the best value for money. This second edition is welcome.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

ONE HUNDRED FATAL ACCIDENTS IN CONSTRUCTION

Health Safety Executive

HMSO, London (1978)

18 pages. Price 90p

Usually the only contact the general practitioner has with fatal accidents occurring in the construction industry is when he is called to attend a suddenly bereaved wife. Fortunately we do not experience many cases in a lifetime and, as they are usually isolated incidents the publicity they create does not have the same impact on the medical profession or the public that a major disaster would have. Yet how many of us realize that in 1975 181 men were killed in the construction industry?

The Health and Safety Executive have tried to publicize this problem by presenting a narrative account of one hundred fatal accidents occurring in the north and east of Scotland from 1960 to