

# BOOK REVIEWS

## BEHAVIOURAL TECHNIQUES

R. Stern

Academic Press Inc.

London (1978)

82 pages. Price £3.50

Current interest in the study of the behavioural sciences and their relevance to general practice makes the appearance of this manual timely. Dr Stern, of the Institute of Psychiatry and the Maudsley Hospital, has produced a clearly written exposé of the secrets of psychotherapists.

His book is a 'do-it-yourself' guide to behaviour therapy—for those with the time to do it. Slow desensitization to phobias, for example, may require over 30 sessions lasting 45 minutes.

No reference is made to group therapy, or to treating behavioural problems in children. There are chapters on the treatment of phobic disorders, obsessive-compulsive neurosis, and behavioural marital problems. Each chapter has a useful summary, and no previous knowledge of the subjects is expected.

Apart from those who are already interested in the subject, doctors who want to familiarize themselves with the range of treatments available (though perhaps not everywhere) will enjoy reading this small book. I myself look forward to trying out the 'cure' for stuttering that is described.

PETER SELLEY

## COLOUR ATLAS OF ORAL MEDICINE

William R. Tyldesley

Wolfe Medical Publications

London (1978)

111 pages. Price £10

General practitioners examine the mouth particularly frequently, especially in children, but traditionally attention has been paid almost exclusively to the pharynx.

Medical school training has often been weak in demonstrating the variety of lesions which can be readily detected in the mouth and the difficulties of teaching them are compounded by the fragmentation of the specialties. Many of the most useful physical signs, for example, appear in conditions which range from the acute infectious diseases

to local lesions involving the teeth and gums, and to more general metabolic or vascular diseases. In particular, examination of the mouth in many dermatological conditions, especially lichen planus, is mandatory but experience is required in interpreting the lesions.

A colour atlas is one obvious mechanism to aid learning and this one can be recommended as covering the common conditions well. At £10 it is reasonably priced.

## A COLOUR ATLAS AND TEXTBOOK OF ORAL ANATOMY

B. K. B. Berkovitz, B. J. Moxham and C. R. Holland

Wolfe Medical Publications

London (1978)

247 pages. Price £20

From the same publishers comes a more elaborate text on the structure of the jaw, mouth, and organs therein. At £20 this is likely to be too expensive for individual doctors, but it is a useful reference work and could well be considered for postgraduate medical centre libraries, where it would be of value both to dental and medical practitioners.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

## THE PLACE OF BIRTH

Sheila Kitzinger and John A.

Davis (Eds)

Oxford University Press

London (1978)

265 pages. Price £7.50

Fifteen chapters by 18 authors deal with a wide range of subjects related to choice of place of birth, including antenatal care, the primary care health team, the case for and against home delivery and women's experience of it, fatherhood, childbirth in Holland and the USA, and obstetric practice, past, present, and future. A list of authors, giving their qualifications, posts held, and publications provides insight into sources of information and opinion.

The editors "have come to question the opinion that the findings of the 1958 perinatal mortality survey have

established for all time that home delivery is much less safe than hospital delivery for all classes of mother and baby". The pity of it is that such an opinion can still exist, 20 years after the event.

The gynaecologist dealing with antenatal care has tolerant guidelines for assessing risk at an early stage of pregnancy. The statistician, on policies for maternity care, needs concentrated study for full understanding, but has his lucid moments, as, for instance, when he writes of deliveries in consultant units. When mothers were classified for potential high risk on an age, parity, and social class basis, the high-risk patients had a lower perinatal mortality rate than the remainder. But do we still need to be told, and by statisticians, that selection by such innocuous factors as maternal age and social class will be submerged later on in pregnancy in the flood of danger from toxæmia, prematurity, and the like?

The chapter on the "Case Against Hospital Delivery" goes a long way towards statistical demolition of the idea that hospital delivery is safer for everyone. Facts from Holland point towards the same conclusions: nearly 50 per cent of babies are born at home and the perinatal mortality rate is well below that in England and Wales. From the USA comes an interesting observation that in high-risk cases nurse auscultation produced a rather better outcome than fetal monitoring.

The primary care health team dealing with maternity work assess the advantages and disadvantages of home and hospital delivery and considers that the domiciliary services must not be allowed to run down. Other chapters deal with the mother's point of view, the father's part, the doubts of a psychoanalyst about the rationale of modern obstetrics, the complexities of the mother and child relationship, and the effects of intensive neonatal care on the family as well as on the neonate.

The final chapter deals with the obstetric services showing that obstetric specialists have taken over, which has led to the near dismantlement of domiciliary services, with little or no regard for the wishes of women who would like to have their babies at home and could safely do so. These are heartening words from a professor of obstetrics: "The public were beguiled . . . with the building of smart custom-built maternity units. But who were the customers? The women to be delivered or the obstetricians?"