

# 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?'

There is a growing demand for changes in the maternity services, and an increasing number of women who think that delivery at home, rather than in a hospital, would be more to their liking. *The Place of Birth* gives reasons for changes in the services and makes interesting reading for anyone interested in the continuation of general practitioner obstetrics as a personal service. It is needed even more by some specialist obstetricians, such as the registrar, for instance, who recently voiced his personal opinion that every woman in labour should be in a specialist hospital, wired up to a fetal monitor.

M. I. COOKSON

## PSYCHOLOGY AND MEDICINE

*S. J. Rachman and Clare Philips*

Penguin Books  
Harmondsworth  
188 pages. Price 90p

I find many Monday mornings a great trial. I begin with good intentions but my patience is gradually worn down by recurrent patient problems such as marital disharmony, headaches, dizzy feelings, and insomnia.

The problem for me is frustration. I come to derive great joy, almost sensual pleasure, from diagnosing and treating a lobar pneumonia or an unsuspected hypothyroidism.

What a happy coincidence, then, that *Psychology and Medicine* should arrive through the post on a particularly gruelling Monday! The authors seemed to appreciate my situation immediately and I became engrossed.

They begin by highlighting many of the problems in medicine and particularly in general practice, such as the changing nature of demands on family practitioners, increasing consumption of medication, and the failure of patients to follow doctor's orders amongst others.

They go on to argue the place of psychologists in educating both doctors and patients to appreciate the importance of self-care, and lay down guidelines for more effective patient/doctor communication and understanding. There are extremely interesting chapters on pain control, sleep disturbances, and anxiety abatement, all written from a refreshingly new angle, which I found most stimulating.

Strangely enough, the chapter on psychology in psychiatric medicine is

the least rewarding, the free style of the rest of the book being cramped by more complex phraseology and arguments over diagnoses and disciplinary responsibility for patient care.

Throughout the book emphasis is laid on the doctor's need to communicate more freely with his patient and the rewards which this brings. There is growing evidence that a patient prepared for illness, pain, or operation requires less medication, recovers more quickly, and shows less emotional disturbance as a result. Patients pay more attention to what we say than we may think. Indeed patients' greatest single complaint is lack of information from the doctor about their illness. Psychologists have the training and ability to help doctors in many spheres of patient care: regrettably, as the authors point out, the numbers willing or able to do so are as yet too small.

I hope that this book is widely read, as it deserves to be, and if many of its ideas are implemented Monday mornings may never be the same again.

JOHN DRUMMOND

## CLINICAL PRACTICE AND ECONOMICS

*C. I. Phillips and J. N. Wolfe (Eds)*

Pitman Medical  
London (1977)

223 pages. Price £2.95

In their introduction to this collection of authoritative essays the editors state: "It is one of our basic premises that greater economy and efficiency in the use of clinical resources is desirable and possible." Most practising doctors would agree with this philosophy and they will find much to interest them in this review of the problems of cost in medical care.

The book is in four parts. The first deals with clinical practice and consists of nine essays covering such topics as the randomized clinical trial, primary care, paediatrics, preventive medicine, and the cost of rescue and survival, and ends with a comment upon the painful facts surrounding choice in health care.

Part two relates to diagnosis and clinical decision making. The third part is about the cost of prescribing, and the use of drugs and drug advertising; and the final part contains two comments upon research in the biomedical sciences.

The book is rounded off by an epilogue written by the editors which sets out 10 suggestions for long-term economies in clinical practice.

One of the essays in the first part is by John Fry, in which he states that there is an abysmal lack of reliable and relevant facts upon which to base decisions for planning and action, that there is a lack of understanding of the implications of the facts that are available, and that even when the results of studies are clear and self-evident the lessons are not applied.

It has been said that if exploration of the unknown were to cease and instead we were to apply properly that which has already been discovered, greater progress would be achieved. While such a concept is arguable there can be no doubt that we have now entered upon an era when the cost of what we are doing is becoming doubly important, both in monetary terms and in the non-monetary terms of suffering and deprivation. This book will stimulate many to think and is cheap enough to be bought by every doctor in the NHS.

H. W. K. ACHESON

## THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE IN SCOTLAND 1948-1978

Scottish Home and Health  
Department

HMSO  
Edinburgh (1978)

35 pages. Free of charge

A brief booklet of a mere 35 pages warrants only a brief review. Scotland would hate to be referred to as a microcosm of England but it has a balance, surely, of some of the best of Britain's rural features together with its share of urban problems. Its Health Service, though set up and organized under separate Acts of Parliament, has developed very much in parallel with the main Health Service and the production of this book is a facet of its continuing independence. There are few important differences between the services.

This booklet was produced for distribution to the 15 health boards which administer the service in Scotland. It is part explanatory and part self-congratulatory and tells the well-informed worker in the NHS little that he does not already know. It is, incidentally, a particularly well-produced publication with really excellent photographs although the type is rather small. However, the question remains—who is it really written for? It is probably most suitable for junior trainees in any discipline who have an interest in working in Scotland.

MALCOLM AYLETT