

**FAMILY PRACTICE
2ND EDITION**

R. Rakel, H. Conn, E. Robert, and
F. Howard

W. B. Saunders
Eastbourne (1978)

1186 pages. Price £27

So many textbooks of medicine seem to cover the whole spectrum of medicine except general practice that it is a pleasant surprise to discover one which professes to cover family practice. Perhaps the disappointment is inevitable: it really is too much to expect that any one book can adequately cover such a large topic.

Some sections are a delight to read. I particularly enjoyed those on counselling but found other chapters dull and turgid. Unequal editing must be partly to blame for such terrible tortology as "... the only two reasons for not doing an annual pap smear would be a recent negative smear . . .". The suggestion that "... the reward for doing a careful pap smear is the assurance that the patient with a negative smear is almost completely safe until her next examination and cytologic smear . . ." says something about American medicine's faith in technology and the doctor/patient relationship. The mixing of approved drug names with trade names, and American at that, would clearly be very confusing to British readers.

However, since much of the book is more relevant to the general practitioner's needs than new editions of standard textbooks of medicine, it should be given a place in the post-graduate centre library.

M. S. HALL

**THERAPY OPTIONS IN
PSYCHIATRY**

J. Connolly (Ed.)

Pitman Medical Publishing
Company Ltd
Tunbridge Wells, Kent (1978)

375 pages. Price £6.95

The therapeutic menu in psychiatry has changed considerably since the days of straight-jackets and padded cells for starters, incarceration for the main course, and no dessert. This book sets out to describe the many different forms of treatment on the current menu.

It is written by psychiatrists primarily for psychiatrists in training. Sixteen contributors, mainly from the West-

minster Hospital, have collaborated to review the full range of therapy options including drugs, psychotherapy, physical treatment, behavioural approaches, hypnotherapy, biofeedback, and many others. It explores specific problems such as personality disorders, sexual dysfunction and variance, childhood and adolescent difficulties, addiction, and psychogeriatrics, as well as outlining family and marital therapy. Different settings for psychiatric care are described and evaluated, with chapters on crisis intervention, walk-in clinics, the psychiatric day hospital, and rehabilitation units.

There is a healthy scepticism throughout, with an extensive bibliography at the end of each chapter. Unfortunately, parts of the book are heavily littered with jargon, making it hard going for the non-specialist. Some sections are too technical and detailed for all but the enthusiast, whilst others are mainly theoretical with little practical information.

There are a few amusing snippets. In one of the earliest accounts of electrical treatment in 1873, electricity was applied 26 times to a woman patient, who subsequently "appeared much brighter" and was "discharged". On page 287 we learn that "recent studies, using penile plethysmography in response to sexual arousal by erotic pictures showed a lower volume in response to alcohol." Fascinating though this may be, I cannot see it replacing the roadside breathalyser unless the weather improves.

Few general practitioners will want to read this book from cover to cover, but it is well worth a place on the shelves of a postgraduate library.

BRIAN J. GOLDEN

AN AGEING POPULATION

Vida Carver and Penny Liddiard
(Eds)

Hodder and Stoughton in
association with the Open
University Press

Sevenoaks, Kent (1978)

434 pages. Price £7.95 (hardback)
and £3.25 (paperback)

In advance of the 'geriatric explosion' the Open University is to transmit a course of the same title as this book. It aims to reach a wide audience among concerned members of the general public, including professional and volunteer workers; to identify the issues raised by the increased proportion of

older people in the community; and to provide the knowledge and skills needed if the handicaps traditionally associated with advanced age are to be reduced. *An Ageing Population* is a set book, or reader, for the course, but is only one component along with correspondence texts, student assignments, and other learning techniques.

Forty-seven carefully selected papers, some classics, some previously unpublished, are assembled here from both sides of the Atlantic. They consist of research reports, theoretical and review studies, personal testimonies, and even a science fiction writer's vision of the future, culled from the literature of all the relevant disciplines. They are grouped into eight sections, each dealing with a separate topic. The first part provides the wider context for all that follows and discusses ageing populations and gerontology. Then follows the experience of ageing, and the myths and stereotypes which structure it. The practical aspects of living in the community, and the needs and problems faced by such communities, lead on to aspects of sickness and disability, and the ways in which various specialized professional workers are involved. The final sections deal with co-ordination of care and co-operative efforts between caring individuals, and the improvement of the quality of life of old people in institutions.

Having been personally involved at the earliest design stage of this course, I can appreciate how well the author and her team have worked. The book they have produced is a remarkable collection of important material, and readers of this *Journal* will find it a useful source book whether they follow the Open University course, or not. There is no other book on the market that includes such practicalities as, for instance, the hazards of setting up a Good Neighbour scheme, or the anatomy of poverty of pensions expressed as analyses of their expenditure. It is useful to have classic papers by such authorities as Bernard Isaacs, John Brocklehurst, Klaus Bergman, and Cicely Saunders, and moving to read a personal testimony on recovery from stroke.

Charles Hodes contributes the section on the Care of the Elderly in General Practice. But I found particular pleasure in some of the contributions from sociology and social work, and in particular a taxonomy of teams, which will make everyone wonder whether the general practitioner team is 'collegial', 'specialized', 'homogeneous', 'heterogeneous', 'apprenticeship', or 'complex'.

This, then, really is one for the