

Book Reviews

London Boroughs between 1974 and 1976, by means of interviews and questionnaires, among social services employees of all grades and clients receiving aids.

The early chapters deal with legislative and financial aspects of the problem and make heavy reading. The sections most relevant to general practitioners deal with the mechanics of ordering aids, the steps which are taken in social services departments, and the use and recall of aids. General practitioners are apparently poor in the use of aid and adaptation services.

There are few surprises amongst the conclusions of this study, solutions hinging on available finances.

This is not a book for the generalist's shelf. It is written in clear print on good paper but the content and message could have been expressed in half the space.

A. P. PRESLEY

UNMET NEEDS AND THE DELIVERY OF CARE

Paul Chapman

Bedford Square Press of the
National Council of Social Service
26 Bedford Square, London WC1
(1979)

110 pages. Price £3.95

Unless they have a special interest in collecting figures relating to the care of the elderly, most general practitioners will not want to read this report, which, although full of facts, is virtually devoid of useful critical observations.

For nine months, from July 1971, an attempt was made to define the unmet needs of old people living in a Ward of Pimlico in Westminster and the way in which they made use of the facilities available. The project was undertaken through Task Force, who asked 100 volunteers to interview a sample group.

Curiously, however, the interviewing schedule, upon which the value of this study and the validity of the conclusions depend, is not reproduced, although the author describes it as unsophisticated. This is unfortunate since the response by those interviewed cannot be assessed effectively in the absence of some common denominator; that is, either the same interviewer or an extremely well designed interviewing schedule.

It is all the more surprising that the author, having acknowledged the many defects in this survey, not only feels able to draw conclusions but also makes firm and far reaching suggestions on how to remedy the problems he has tried to define. His recommendations may have

merit in their own right but they are not validated by the survey itself.

CLIVE FROGGATT

THE MEDICAL ANNUAL 1979/80

Sir Ronald Bodley Scott and Sir James Fraser (Eds)

John Wright & Sons
Bristol (1979)

360 pages. Price £12.50

There has been no let-up in the flood of medical literature, and the doctor with wide interests, wishing to keep in touch with developments in his own and other disciplines, is faced with problems. One way of tackling them is provided by such publications as *The Medical Annual*, which brings together in summary form a critique of recent and important literature relevant to different specialties. While emphasis is on management (the publication bears the subtitle *The Yearbook of Treatment*), other aspects of diseases and health services are discussed. This year the volume includes special articles, one on recent developments in the treatment of diabetes mellitus and the other on underwater medicine. As in previous years, over 50 authors collaborate in presenting their reviews of important trends in over 30 disciplines.

The contribution from general practice summarizes developments both in the academic discipline—with evidence of a growing confidence based on experience—and in day-to-day care of patients. That these two themes are closely inter-related is shown in several of the sections, such as those dealing with medical audit and with the general practitioner's relationship with consultants. In addition, significant developments in vocational training are crisply summarized.

It is difficult to give an impression of this book, so different are the approaches of the various authors, and so wide-ranging is the scope. However, with such diversity there is likely to be something of interest to all doctors. The clinician will be reassured that the old-fashioned stethoscope still has a place in physical examination of the patient. The therapeutic nihilist will be interested to find support for the hypothesis that placebo analgesia has a physical basis. The seeker after more recondite knowledge will find a wealth of biomedical detail in most of the sections.

It would be idle to pretend that one's routine clinical practice will be significantly altered by reading this book, but for the trainer wishing to communicate

more fully with his trainee (who is likely to be more conversant with many of the issues it discusses) and for the interested family doctor whose hobbies include clinical medicine, this is money well spent.

J. D. E. KNOX

PSYCHO-SEXUAL PROBLEMS

A Directory of Agencies Offering
Therapy, Counselling, and Support
Francis Taylor (Ed.)

British Association for
Counselling
London (1978)

69 pages. Price £1.50

The British Association for Counselling has now produced a first edition listing the agencies offering therapy, counselling, and support for patients with psycho-sexual problems. This is a useful reference booklet for general practitioners and can be obtained from 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU.

D. J. PEREIRA GRAY

PUBLICATIONS OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION 1973-1977. A BIBLIOGRAPHY

World Health Organization
Geneva (1979)

Trilingual edition in
English/French/Spanish

388 pages. Price £10.39

World Health Organization means different things to different people but few recognize it as one of the bigger operators in the publishing business. Its performance is impressive and this new bibliography covering the period 1973 to 1977 contains over 3,000 citations.

Those who wish to brush up their French and Spanish will appreciate a trilingual volume with cross-referencing indexes from one language to another.

General practice as such does not figure largely in the list of publications, though many of the epidemiological papers have a bearing on primary health care. Perhaps the report on publications in the next quinquennium will pay more regard to our discipline, but only if we ourselves think and write about matters which are the concern of WHO. The adoption by WHO of the WONCA classification of health problems in primary care would be a good step forward.

R. F. J. H. PINSENT