

condemns baths deeper than six inches, which is just the sort of advice that makes the public see preventive medicine as a joke. Perhaps it is just this sort of contamination of the excellent that has put people off Dr Cyriax in the past.

The test of any book is that it should teach the reader something, and remain a useful source of reference. Even if you are not a Cyriax 'believer', this book passes the test.

DAVID HASLAM

1980 YEAR BOOK OF FAMILY PRACTICE

Ed. R. E. Raket

Year Book Medical Publishers Ltd
Chicago and London (1980)

453 pages. Price £28.25

The Year Books are a highly successful American series covering 23 specialties. Each one is a collection of abstracts-digests plus short commentaries on papers selected by the editor as of particular importance and relevance to the specialty. It is significant that family (general) practice now takes its place in the series.

The 1980 Year Book of Family Practice is edited by a professor of family practice in Iowa, USA. The period reviewed is mid 1978 to mid 1979. The 18 regional sections have their own sub-editor. The 400 selected papers for abstraction are said to have come from an

original batch of 20,000!

The material is well abstracted and most of the very short commentaries are helpful. The presentation, however, could be easier on the eye and the material could be more attractively displayed. If you are an abstract fan or enjoy *Reader's Digest*, then you will become an enthusiastic regular reader of the Year Book. It is smaller than our own Medical Annual and has a much greater North American input.

I must admit that I enjoyed reading through this collection and learnt much that was new to me. I can recommend it as a good quick read in a library, but, at £28.25, I would not class it as a good buy.

JOHN FRY

STAMMERING: PRACTICAL HELP FOR ALL AGES

Ann Irwin

Penguin Books Ltd
Harmondsworth (1980)

137 pages. Price £1.35

This slim volume should be read by all in general practice and is certainly of considerable help to those afflicted with a stammer. The plain and sensitive description and understanding shown by the author, and her resistance to jargon and overpowering medical terminology, make this a most readable book. This is

speech therapy at its simplest and, one suspects, its best. The author is currently in charge of the Department of Speech Therapy at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle and her book can be safely recommended to parents of stammering children and others who have to come to grips with a stammer or stammering relatives.

E. V. KUENSSBERG

VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS: AN NCVO DIRECTORY 1980/81

Bedford Square Press for the
National Council of Voluntary
Organizations

London (1980)

191 pages. Price £3.95

When an old friend gets a new name, it is helpful that as many people as possible should be told, and it is therefore appropriate to notice here the eleventh edition of what used to be called *Voluntary Social Services*, published by the National Council of Social Services. The guide remains, in spite of good competition, one of the very best: comprehensive (over 500 organizations are named), together with their addresses and summaries of aims and activities. This is a booklet for the practice library, so that all the team have access to it.

S. L. BARLEY

REPORT

Television and the Consultation, Aberdeen, 23-25 September 1980

Introduction

THIS conference was a response to the growing use of television in general practice. Its aim was partly to take stock of the current situation, and partly to develop new ideas for televised teaching material. A particular interest was the use of television in teaching about the consultation. The 40 delegates included representatives from most university departments of general practice, some regional advisers and guests from other disciplines including clinical psychology, psychiatry, education, social work and jurisprudence.

The discussions centred around four general areas:

1. *Aims*. What do we want to teach about the consultation?
2. *Methods*. How can we best teach it?
3. *Materials*. How are existing materials used?
4. *Techniques*. What are the technical problems of using television in this context?

Proceedings

Speakers

A pre-conference evening session set the scene by reporting the results of a postal survey of the present use

of television in teaching by university and regional adviser staff (the survey results are to be published in *The Journal of Audiovisual Media in Medicine*).

Dr Peter Maguire, Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, University of Manchester, opened the first full day of the conference with a paper called 'Deficiencies in skills in communicating with patients'. He outlined evidence suggesting that medical students and doctors often lack communication skills and that these deficiencies affect the outcome of care. He emphasized the importance of direct observation and analysis of consulting performance followed by feedback, systematic practice and discussion, and challenged us to find effective ways of doing this in general practice. His talk was followed by group discussions on teaching aims.

In the afternoon Professor Arnold Morrison, Department of Education, University of Stirling, stressed the importance of developing teaching methods which would not only influence attitudes but change behaviour. Talking mainly about postgraduate training, he outlined a model for professional training which emphasized the need for variety in approach and allowed training methods to match the needs of individual trainees. The group discussions which followed were on teaching methods.

The greater part of the second day was devoted to review of videotaped material submitted by delegates. Each small group was provided with replay equipment and asked to review and discuss three tapes. In the report back session each group selected a short excerpt to demonstrate a point to the full conference. Delegates thus saw a wide range of materials, but time was too short for detailed discussion. Although on this occasion it was felt that preselecting tapes would have discouraged people from exchanging material, it was thought that at future conferences it would be better to concentrate on a few well-chosen tapes.

Introducing the final session on television techniques, Mr James Woodward-Nutt, Senior Engineer, Aberdeen University Television Service, gave a light-hearted but informative talk on selecting equipment and discussed the technical difficulties which may arise when using simple equipment to televise consultations.

Group discussions

It is difficult to summarize the discussions which took place within the five small groups. Because the direction of the discussions was left for each leader to decide, the groups tended to cover rather different ground. In retrospect, a minority of delegates felt that there was insufficient direction and consequently a lack of definable achievement, although most agreed that the conference achieved its aim of reflecting critically on our current use of television in teaching.

Variation in the experience and interests of delegates created problems. For example, those who had more recently started using television, those who were largely interested in seeing what other people had produced, and the smaller number who had more extensive experience and who wanted to discuss their use of television to date, all had different contributions and different interests. Another distinction could be made between those who were largely interested in simulation and role-play and those who were primarily interested in capturing 'real' consultations on videotape.

Conclusions

Delegates enjoyed the conference, but most felt that there was now a need for more specific discussion. There are parallels here with the consultation itself. Just as it is best to uncover a patient's problems by adopting an open and relatively unstructured initial approach, so this conference has identified some of the problem areas of television teaching.

R. J. TAYLOR
Conference Organizer

Acknowledgements

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I am especially grateful to Mrs Jill Bridges, who gave invaluable help as Conference Secretary, and to Mr Alan Grimley, Director, Aberdeen University Television Service, and his staff.

OBITUARY

Edith, Lady Wolfson, Hon. FRCGP

EDITH Specterman was born in London in 1907 and died on 7 January 1981. At the age of 20 she married Isaac Wolfson and by her support helped him build his business empire. She was actively involved in much of his charitable work in the fields of medicine, education and religion. Though she herself rarely took

the limelight, her advice was sought and gladly given on many occasions. In particular, she was extremely helpful to the Royal College of General Practitioners when the Wolfson Foundation first considered awarding travelling fellowships to members of our College. She was particularly thrilled to receive our Honorary Fellowship during our Jubilee Year and had the honour of receiving the diploma from His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh.