
GENERAL PRACTICE LITERATURE

NEW BOOKS

RECENT ADVANCES IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

J. C. McDonald (editor)

Churchill Livingstone,
Edinburgh (1982)

292 pages. Price £16.00

This is the first Recent Advances devoted to industrial medicine, an indication of our general neglect of the role of work in the lives of our patients.

None of the chapters is without interest, and depending on the local character of employment all general practitioners will find relevant specialist topics. The chapters are commendably short and not too discursive. As in nearly all medical writing on industrial problems, the realities of social relations in industry are almost entirely ignored, except in the refreshingly critical chapter on accident prevention by Booth.

How many of us give our trainees an opportunity to follow our patients into their pits and factories and open a chink on the secret life of work? It is an area we rarely think about, and that is dangerous. Getting this book onto the shelf at the postgraduate centre might do a little to encourage more intelligent interest.

J. TUDOR HART
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VITALITY AND AGING. IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECTANGULAR CURVE

James F. Fries, Lawrence M. Crapo

Freeman
Oxford (1982)

172 pages. Price £12.95 (hardback),
£5.95 (paperback)

'The number of extremely old persons will not increase. The percentage of a typical life spent in dependency will decrease. The period of adult vigour will be prolonged. The need for intensive medical care will decrease. The cost of medical care will decrease, and the quality of life, in a nearly disease free so-

ciety, will be much improved.' If these conclusions surprise you, or encourage your latent disbelief in the received capillary wisdom of our generation, read on. Fries and Crapo thoroughly validate their conclusions in a short, readable book which deserves a place in every postgraduate centre and on the trainee bookshelf of every teaching practice. It loses its way a bit towards the end, betraying its origins in the intelligent but egotistical society of campus California, but do not be put off by this. Readers who still have faith in a real community can draw their own more practical and constructive conclusions, from good evidence which is well presented.

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THE ANXIOUS PATIENT

Torben Bendix

Churchill Livingstone
Edinburgh

70 pages. Price £1.95

Torben Bendix takes the difficult area of counselling in general practice and distils its interactions into rules and regulations that are easy to apply in practice.

He eschews the disease-orientated approach in neurosis replacing it with a patient-centred one.

The maxim that 'if you ask questions, you only get answers' is built into his philosophy. The patient holds the answers to his own problems and by the judicious management of the consultation can resolve them himself.

Treatment in neurosis is seen as hindering resolution and establishing the sick role. The method is conveyed in a simple, methodical and very readable format.

The rules are outlined for the therapeutic dialogue. The behaviour of the therapist is clearly defined. Aspects of the games patients play are discussed. Finally the reader is invited to participate.

This book is too useful to ignore and is a valuable addition to any practice library. It will be of particular interest to those involved in group work or teaching trainees.

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Dunfermline

HOW TO WRITE AND PUBLISH PAPERS IN THE MEDICAL SCIENCES

Edward J. Huth

ISI Press, Philadelphia (1982)

203 pages. Price \$17.95 (hardback),
\$11.95 (paperback)

'Battered by the commonplace' was a phrase often used by Dr John Stevens of Aldeburgh to describe the clinical activities of general practice. Medical editors often feel that they too are battered by the commonplace, but instead of setting up vocational training schemes to work off their feelings, they write books. Dr Huth, editor of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, now adds his advice to that contained in several similar books already available; his is an American voice, and he reflects the North American academic scene. I could find no mention of family or general practice, let alone the problems of the non-academic general practitioner working and writing alone.

In his 20 chapters he covers the whole task of writing up medical research, proceeding logically from the very first, necessary and often overlooked step of asking whether there is likely to be any point in the resultant paper at all. Huth is good on this and on other topics like the need to search the literature and to revise one's drafts again and again. I found his detailed advice less helpful, particularly because I suspect that very few authors learn the art of better writing from reading books telling them how to produce it. While some chapters would be worth looking at in a library, most British authors would get more help from *Thorne's Medical Writing*, by Stephen Lock (2nd edition, 1977), or from *Writing Scientific Papers in English*, by Maeve O'Connor and Peter Woodford (Pitman, 1978).

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SCHRIRE'S CLINICAL CARDIOLOGY

We apologize to Dr Schrire's family for the unfortunate misprints introduced during the editing of Dr Tudor Hart's review of Schrire's Clinical Cardiology (August 1982).

EDITOR