

munication skills of palliative care teams in hospices and general hospitals, enrich even further with the profound understanding garnished with kindly humour of Michael Simpson, add the pharmacological skills of the pain therapist such as Ian Clarke and the compassionate perceptiveness of oncologists like Mott and Stoll, a psychiatrist such as McGuire, and the doyen of geriatricians, Sir Ferguson Anderson. Leave the delicate blending of these contributions and many others equally readable to Eric Wilkes, who has for so long charmed us with Churchillian eloquence while at the same time so gently rebuking us for our failures or complacency. The recipe works, the end product is a delight and something to be savoured and digested slowly and deliberately.

Here is a work long overdue, a masterly volume to inform and inspire all who care for the incurables and dying, a reference work beyond compare on pain and symptom control, chapters which ring so true that they create discomfort and shame when they highlight some inconsiderate regimes or insensitive communications, a guide book for general practitioners and consultants alike.

As Whitehouse says at the conclusion of his chapter, 'Medical training prepares doctors poorly for what is a fairly common problem in clinical practice and most doctors learn to deal with this situation only when faced with the re-

ality of the many problems that exist.'

This book will go further than any yet produced to correct this deficiency.

My only reservation, and the highest praise I can give it, is that Wilkes's book will be so established on the bookshelves that some may not need to read our Edinburgh book, in similar vein due in 1983.

DEREK DOYLE  
Medical Director  
St Columba's Hospice  
Edinburgh

### A HISTORY OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

John Fry, Lord Hunt of Fawley,  
R. J. F. H. Pinsent (Editors)

MTP Press  
Lancaster (1983)  
270 pages. Price £12.00

For the College to achieve as much in the next 30 years as it has in those now past, the current Members need to understand what has happened already.

*A History of the Royal College of General Practitioners—the first 25 years* documents the facts and details the ar-

guments and discussions that were fundamental in the formative years. The editors have drawn together those threads of ideas and they describe with consummate skill how the threads were woven into an historic tapestry for the College.

This book is utterly fascinating. Dispel any thoughts of its gathering dust on the bookshelf; its style and content make it compulsive reading. The knowledge it imparts should both humble and inspire those who now work in the College. Examples of dedication and hard work, original thought and innovation are catalogued in every chapter.

The book is engagingly modest about the role of the College in raising the status of general practice, the standards of patient care and postgraduate medical education. Evidence of its contribution is there though and readers may draw their own conclusions.

A few constructive criticisms may have given more credibility to this review. However, having read the book from cover to cover and reread many large chunks, I have yet to find something to fault.

For those who are dedicated to general practice, this book provides a perspective of the past and will be invaluable for the future.

CLIVE FROGGATT  
General Practitioner  
Cheltenham

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

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**WORK AND HEALTH**, Andrew Melhuish, Penguin Books, London, 1982. 208 pages. Price £2.50 (paperback).

**MARRIAGES IN TROUBLE. The process of seeking help**, Julia Brannen, Jean Collard, Tavistock, London, 1982. 266 pages. Price £13.50.

**CURED TO DEATH. The effects of prescription drugs**, Arabella Melville and Colin Johnson, Secker and Warburg, London, 1982. 261 pages. Price £8.50.

**LIVING INDEPENDENTLY**, Ann Shearer, Centre on Environment for the Handicapped and King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, 1982. 126 pages. Price £5.00 (paperback).

**CARE OF THE ACUTELY ILL AND INJURED**, David H. Wilson and Andrew K Marsden (editors), Wiley, Chichester, 1982. 462 pages. Price £22.00.

**LETTING GO. Caring for the dying and bereaved**, Iain Ainsworth-Smith and Peter Speck, SPCK, London, 1982. 153 pages. Price £3.95 (paperback).

**DRUG TREATMENT IN THE ELDERLY. Disease management in the elderly, vol 1**, Elspeth T Macdonald and J. B. Macdonald, Wiley, Chichester, 1982. 245 pages. Price £14.95.

**SMOKING. Psychology and pharmacology**, Heather Ashton, Rob Stepney, Tavistock Publications, London, 1982. 222 pages. Price £3.95 (paperback).

**MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS FOR THE MRCP**, Pankaj Joshi, Butterworths, Sevenoaks, 1982. 253 pages. Price £6.95 (paperback).

**PROBLEMS IN GASTROENTEROLOGY. Problems in practice series**, Michael Lancaster-Smith and Kenneth Williams, MTP Press, Lancaster, 1982. 218 pages. Price £7.95.

**PSYCHIATRY AND GENERAL PRACTICE**, Anthony W. Clare and Malcolm Lader (editors), Academic Press, London, 1982. 165 pages. Price £12.50.

**OPTICS IN VISION (2nd edition). Foundation of visual optics and associated computations**, Henri Obstfeld, Butterworths, Sevenoaks, 1982. 411 pages. Price £22.50.

**GUIDE FOR TRAINEES IN GENERAL PRACTICE**, John Fry (editor), Heinemann, London, 1982. 179 pages. Price £6.50 (paperback).

**CHILDHOOD DIABETES: THE FACTS**, Oman Craig, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982. 163 pages. Price £5.95.

**THE BEECHAM MANUAL FOR FAMILY PRACTICE**, J. Fry (Editor), MTP Press, Lancaster, 1982. 232 pages. Price £11.95.

**ALLERGY THERAPEUTICS**, Keith Eaton, Anne Adams and Janet Duberley, Baillière Tindall, London, 1982. 126 pages. Price £5.50 (paperback).

**DIABETES EXPLAINED (4th edition)**, Arnold Bloom, MTP Press, Lancaster, 1982. 168 pages. Price £6.95.

**EARLY DIAGNOSIS OF FETAL DEFECTS. Current Reviews in Obstetrics and Gynaecology**, D. J. H. Brock, Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, 1982. 165 pages. Price £7.95 (paperback).

**SHARED ENTHUSIASM. The story of Lord and Lady Beveridge**, Philip Beveridge Mair, Ascent Books, Windlesham, 1982. 157 pages. Price £7.95.

**EMERGENCIES IN THE HOME. Articles from the British Medical Journal**, British Medical Association, London, 1982. 112 pages. Price £5.00 (paperback).