
MEDICAL LITERATURE

BOOKS REVIEWED

POLITICAL ANATOMY OF THE BODY

Medical knowledge in Britain in the twentieth century

David Armstrong

Cambridge University Press,
Cambridge (1983)

146 pages. Price £17.50

This is an interesting book for several reasons. It documents the changes in medical concepts and thinking which have occurred during the last century. The author is the Senior Lecturer in Sociology as Applied to Medicine at Guy's Hospital Medical School and from this vantage point he is able to offer new insights into the way in which doctors think. Dr Armstrong identifies the dispensary as the origins of the interests that medicine now takes in community health. He contrasts this approach with the medicine of the late 18th and early 19th century, when, by dissection and observation, the individual was seen in isolation.

The book has a tendency to be long-winded and to make some simple ideas appear complicated. However, the subject is a difficult one and the book documents very well the subtle interplay between medicine and society.

E.G.B.

THE MEDICAL ANNUAL 1983. THE YEAR BOOK OF GENERAL PRACTICE

D. J. Pereira Gray (editor)

Wright
Bristol (1983)

284 pages. Price £17.50

A change in policy has occurred under the new editor of the 101st publication of *The Medical Annual*, a book aimed at general practitioners, trainees and colleagues interested in the newer developments of primary medical care.

The content is divided into five areas: health and disease, human development, human behaviour, medicine and society and practice organization. The authors of the chapters have contributed person-

al views of their subjects. About half of the contributors are general practitioners in active practice in many different parts of the United Kingdom. The Royal College of General Practitioners is strongly represented by the President, several Committee Chairmen, the Chief Examiner, the Editor of the Journal, the Librarian and the Stuart Fellow. The other half of the contributors are specialists—physicians, surgeons, community physicians and medical administrators—who provide comments from different perspectives relevant to general practice.

This publication will prove to be a most useful series for the practice library and essential reading for trainers and course organizers, not least for the 1,300 annual candidates for the MRCGP examinations.

R. M. J. PRICE
General Practitioner,
Hemel Hempstead

INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT—THE BATTLE AGAINST HANDICAP

Alistair Heron and Mary Myers

Academic Press
London (1983)

Price £13.40

It is refreshing to read a book that is both critical and constructive in its approach. The intellectually impaired have been with us throughout history in all strata of society and in all age groups. It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that there is little consensus on the best way of providing a rewarding life for these people. Historically and internationally the care provided has been either non-existent (except for the family) or institutional care for life.

Current thinking maintains that all handicapped people have a place in the community and our aim should be to enable them to have an independent life within that setting. This book takes an overall look at ways of achieving the aim in this country, in other western systems and in the Third World. The UK does not come out of this too badly, but neither is it top of the tree. The primary care team—essential for supporting handicapped people in the community—is often conspicuous by its absence. It is not to say that the general practitioner, the community nurse or the health visitor have a major role in day-to-day care,

but that they should be more aware of what is possible in their own areas and be able to guide families and voluntary workers in a positive way. It is unlikely that general practitioners will have all the options at their fingertips and it is, therefore, salutary for us to be reminded in this way.

The one drawback is the cost of the book. With increasing pressure on doctors to maintain practice libraries it is important that useful books should be available at an early stage in a paperback edition.

P. A. GREIG
General Practitioner, Sheffield

BOOKS RECEIVED

INFECTIOUS DISEASES, Barbara A. Bannister, Baillière Tindall, London, 1983. 278 pages. Price £6.95 (paperback).

ORGANISING A PRACTICE. Articles from the *British Medical Journal*, *British Medical Journal*, London, 1983. 157 pages. Price £5.50 (paperback).

AVIATION MEDICINE. Articles from *The British Medical Journal*, Richard M. Harding and F. John Mills, *British Medical Journal*, London, 1983. 148 pages. Price £5.50 (paperback).

A CLINICAL APPROACH TO PROGRESS IN INFECTIOUS DISEASES, W. Brumfitt and J. M. T. Hamilton-Miller (editors), Oxford University Press, 1983. 163 pages. Price £12.50.

CLINICS IN RHEUMATIC DISEASES, The Role of the Laboratory in Rheumatology, W. B. Saunders, Chichester, 1983. 288 pages. Price £11.75.

CURRENT THERAPY IN INFECTIOUS DISEASE 1983-1984, E. H. Kass and R. Platt (editors), Blackwell, Oxford, 1983. 296 pages. Price £35.20.

NOTES FOR THE DRCOG, Peter Kaye, Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, 1983. 184 pages. Price £8.95 (paperback).

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND CONSULTANTS. A Study of Outpatient Referrals, Robin Dowie, Oxford University Press, 1983. 207 pages. Price £8.50.

THE 1983 YEAR BOOK OF FAMILY PRACTICE, Robert E. Rakel (editor), Blackwell, Oxford, 1983. 591 pages. Price £33.60.

INTRODUCTION TO CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE, John Walton, Baillière Tindall, London, 1983. 246 pages. Price £8.75.