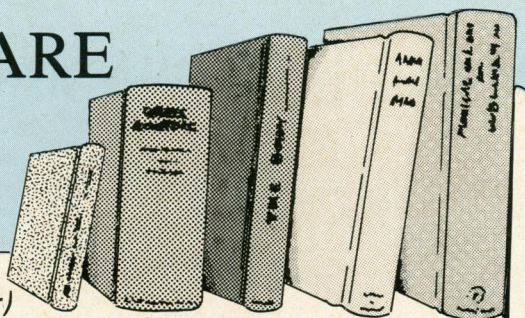


PRIMARY CARE BOOK SHELF



Reviews by

R. HARVARD DAVIS

T. C. O'DOWD

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NIGEL STOTT (Reviews Editor)

EDUCATION FOR THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS Policies for the 1980's

An OECD/CERI report compiled by:

P. F. Regan and H. C. Schutze

Almqvist and Wiksell International, Stockholm (1983)

86 pages. Price 65 kr (approx. £6).

TEXTBOOK OF FAMILY PRACTICE (3rd edition)

R. E. Rakel (Ed)

W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia and London (1984)

1,506 pages. Price £87.50

THE MEDICAL ANNUAL 1984 The Yearbook of General Practice

D. J. Pereira Gray (Ed)

Jonn Wright, Bristol

303 pages. Price £17.50.

PREGNANCY CARE FOR THE 1980's

L. Zander and G. Chamberlain (Eds)

Royal Society of Medicine

Macmillan, London (1984)

280 pages. Price £30.00 hardback, £10.95 paperback.

Book reviews this month from the Academic Department of General Practice at the Welsh National School of Medicine raise four controversial questions:

Does medical education in the 1980s inhibit the development of a rational health-care system?

Is there a place for 'big textbooks' on family practice/primary health care?

Is enough happening in Britain to justify a yearbook of general practice?

What authoritative information is available on the changes which should be occurring in modern obstetrics?

Education for the health professions is a scholarly yet concise text which is essential reading for the deans of medical schools and anyone who takes a serious interest in planning or education for health care. For those involved in primary health care it provides an international focus which should be informative and challenging.

The troubled interrelationship between health care systems and educational systems is the theme of this report, which represents the distilled wisdom of a wide range of experts from most European countries and Canada, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, USA, Japan, Finland, Australia, New Zealand and Yugoslavia. These people attended a series of national seminars between 1977 and 1981 to relate and clarify their current positions to the earlier report entitled *New directions in education for changing health care systems* (1973).

The picture which emerges from the analysis is that, despite the fact that most countries have policies aimed at promoting primary health care, specialization continues to diminish and fragment all primary health care efforts and most education of health care professions still follows patterns established in the 1950s and 1960s. Education remains bound to tertiary care university hospitals, and these remain isolated from the health care systems which try to provide individually orientated primary care. A high proportion of those working in primary health care are, therefore, never trained to adopt the principles and practices which lead to excellent primary care and those in specialist work seldom have insight into primary health care.

Sweden and Finland are singled out as examples of radical reordering of the linkages between health care policies and educational institutions because community-based education, interdisciplinary training and strong primary care input have been influential changes. In Canada and the USA 'health science centres' can ensure close collaboration and combined teaching of many health-related professions. These provide the administrative means for fostering team work and the sharing of clinical resources, but such developments are patchy and overshadowed by the older style hospital-based health

care training — in 1981 28 per cent of medical schools in the USA still had no department of family medicine.

The authors feel that change is likely to remain slow without governmental intervention at high level in the ministries of education and health. They point out that between a third and a quarter of national expenditures on post-secondary education are consumed by the health professions and so the public deserve better co-ordination of education policies, leaving less room for specialist dominated planning.

This is a book which should be drawn to the attention of your MP, MEP and medicopolitical overlords after you have digested it yourself. It is uncomfortable and challenging because it is factual rather than opinionated, but the politically orientated conclusion will not please all its readers.

The third edition of Professor Rakel's *Textbook of family practice* will fill nearly three inches of shelf, an imposing tome in your 'office' bookcase. It is not an easy text to review because so many principles and practices are embraced, some specialized and some generalized, some parochial and some international. When Professor Harvard Davis read this book he commented how the principles which transcend the conventional specialist orientation nevertheless divide into (i) those that are common to primary care in all countries and (ii) those that are largely conditioned by local sociodemographic considerations.

'Professor Rakel's book,' said R.H.D. 'is a multiauthor work emanating from the United States of America. Each chapter is prepared by two authors, one an experienced family physician and the other an authority in the particular field of the chapter, with the aim of ensuring relevance and depth. The book is divided into six parts, the first four parts (29 chapters, 304 pages) deal with the principles, special problems and particular skills of family medicine, its role in preventive medicine, its relationship to other services in the community and research. These parts are to me the most interesting. Part six (seven chapters, 107 pages) is concerned with particular aspects of practice management in the American context. The remainder, part five, and the bulk of the book (34 chapters, 1,011 pages), starts with an interesting introductory chapter on the early diagnosis of undifferentiated problems by Ian McWhinney. Thereafter each chapter sets a perspective of the various systems or specialties in relation to family medicine and deals with symptoms, signs, investigations and treatment. The individual chapters aim to centre upon those conditions commonly encountered in primary care. Nevertheless one gets the feeling of a textbook of medicine. Each chapter, particularly in Part five, is essentially free-standing. By that I mean each can be read usefully without reference to the book as a whole. The overall quality of the contributions is high. In particular I liked the chapters on

the 'Care of the dying patient', the 'Periodic health examination', 'Behavioural problems in children and adolescents' and 'Sexual health care'. Many of the chapters include well-selected and extensive references, but it is a pity that they are largely drawn from the American literature. The line diagrams and illustrations, including some colour photographs, are of a high quality. Unfortunately the standard of indexing is not commensurate with the quality of the contributions and this must detract from the usefulness of the book as an immediate source of reference.

'The book is an attempt to produce for primary care the traditional reference book of a clinical discipline which is largely relevant to the health care system in North America. One of the problems in any such textbook, as the authors of the UK contribution mention, is the difficulty in keeping pace with advances in therapy. It is debatable whether primary care lends itself to the traditional textbook treatment. This does not imply that primary care is not a coherent discipline. It means that the international discipline is based much more upon the attitudes of primary physicians together with the knowledge and skills which let them sustain these attitudes.'

The Americans seem to like big tomes whereas the British indulge in many smaller texts, and the critical reader must ask whether this is the result of academic vanity or real progress? The latest British book is *The Medical Annual 1984* and Dr O'Dowd comments:

'The Bishop of London objecting to Snow removing the handle from the Broad Street pump said, "I would rather take my risk with cholera than have any man tell me what I may or may not drink."

' "Who is going to grasp the preventive pump handle today?" asks Donald Gau, one of 23 authors of this year's *Medical Annual*. The 1984 yearbook continues using the five areas of the Royal College of General Practitioners to classify its contents. It claims that many of its authors are under 40 years of age, and certainly there is an emphasis on the growing points in general practice and the annual is sufficiently flexible to deal with a wider range of topics than last year. It is a reflection of the growth of general practice, is well laid out and very readable. The authors tackle topics in a manner that is always interesting and often provocative; only a few topics are so vast that authors, compelled to completeness, ended up giving a traditional overview that was too predictable.

'This book fills a gap in general practice literature by allowing thoughtful contributions on such topics as Muslim patients and the general practitioner, the health of doctors' families, mother and baby groups, and the practice nurse. Well referenced and well indexed, this annual is suited to the needs of all general practitioners, whether trained or in training.'

Pregnancy care in the 1980's is a topical theme for a new book and it is especially significant in the UK, where the Maternity Services Advisory Committee has produced two reports since 1982. This is indicative of governmental continuing concern about improving the quality of maternity care despite good progress with perinatal mortality, and Simon Smail picks up the theme as he comments on the new work from the Royal Society of Medicine:

'Obstetric care has changed quite dramatically over the last decade. Obstetric units have become increasingly self-critical and we have seen policies for routine care during confinement move away from aggressive interventionist intra-partum care. Much of this change has been stimulated by consumer interest, and by re-examination of the impact of interventionist obstetrics by epidemiologists, paediatricians and social scientists as well as by obstetricians themselves. This book marks a major milestone in this process of change.

'The book is the report of a conference held in 1980 at the Royal Society of Medicine which brought together obstetricians, general practitioners, paediatricians, epidemiologists, statisticians and social scientists; but, most importantly, the conference included representatives of patient groups. The contributors to the conference provided nearly 30 short papers covering a variety of aspects of obstetric care, looking at both the priorities and problems facing them at the time of the conference. Most of the papers relate principally to community aspects of obstetric care. In the first section, antenatal care is discussed and a number of alternative models of community-based antenatal care are described. A thoughtful paper from Dr Marion Hall questions some of the basic assumptions made in the provision of an antenatal service. The second group of papers deals with the bonding process, and further sections concern intranatal care — both in the community and in hospital. Papers by Professor Eva Alberman and Mrs Marjorie Tew review the statistical evidence comparing the outcomes of home and hospital confinement, and conclude that for low-risk mothers home confinement is the safer option for baby and mother.

'After each set of papers, the discussion is faithfully recorded, and for me this was one of the delights of the work. For example, Mrs Tew's figures were challenged by an obstetrician but other contributors sprang to her defence to ask why her work had not already been accepted by the profession, and why it had not led to a swing away from interventionist obstetrics. These discussions frequently help to crystallize the essence of the arguments better than the formal papers. Later sections deal with education and preparation for parenthood, and planning for obstetric services in the future.

'Any general practitioner will find this an absorbing work and those in vocational training should certainly read it. To some extent it must be seen as an historical document: a statement of the arguments about com-

munity obstetric care as they existed at the beginning of the 1980s. Yet that is its appeal. The debates have developed further since 1980 and will continue, but I am sure this book will come to be seen as an important source-book to inform the debate.'

BOOKS RECEIVED

CERTIFICATION IN SOCIAL SERVICE —

The Durham papers

CCETSW paper 9.7 (1984)

Central Council for Education and Training in Social work, London.

88 pages. Price £3.50.

PROGRESS IN CARDIOLOGY

P. N. Yu and J. F. Goodwin (1983)

Lea and Febiger, Philadelphia.

290 pages. Price £49.50.

A PRIMER OF MEDICINE

(5th edition)

M. H. Papworth (1984)

Butterworth, London.

378 pages. Price £19.50

MANUAL OF INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE

J. M. Rippe and M. E. Csete (Eds) (1983).

Little Brown, Boston.

465 pages. Price \$17.95

CLINICAL MANUAL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

M. W. Rytel and W. J. Mogabgab (Eds) (1984)

Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago.

523 pages. Price £21.50.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC QUIZ IN MEDICINE

P. Ebdon, M.A.N. Peiris and M. J. Dew (1984)

Lloyd-Luke, London.

211 pages. Price £9.00.

PRENATAL DIAGNOSIS

Proceedings of the Eleventh Study Group of the RCOG

C. H. Rodeck and K. H. Nicolaides (Eds) (1984)

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, London.

398 pages. Price £16.50.

A SHORT TEXTBOOK OF PAEDIATRICS

(2nd edition)

P. Catzel and I. Roberts (1984)

Hodder and Stoughton, London.

416 pages. Price £7.95.