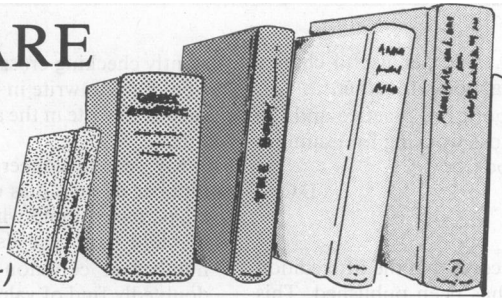


PRIMARY CARE BOOK SHELF

NIGEL STOTT (Reviews Editor)



P. KNOYLE
D.G. SALTER
S.A. SMAIL
G.F. MORGAN

TUTORIALS IN GENERAL PRACTICE

Michael Mead and Henry Patterson
Pitman Publishing, London (1983)
142 pages. Price £9.95

CASE PRESENTATIONS IN GASTROINTESTINAL DISEASE

W.D.W. Rees, S. Hughes, J.L. Shaffer and G.R. Barclay
Butterworths, London (1985)
201 pages. Price £6.95

MEDICINES: A GUIDE FOR EVERYBODY (5th edition)

Peter Parish
Penguin Books, London (1985)
636 pages. Price £4.95

THE PARENTS' A-Z

Penelope Leach
Penguin Books, London (1985)
736 pages. Price £6.95

THAT'S LIFE — SURVEY ON TRANQUILLISERS

Ron Lacey and Shaun Woodward
BBC Publications, London (1985)
147 pages. Price £2.95

COMING OFF TRANQUILLISERS

S.A. Trickett
SAT Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne (1984)
78 pages. Price £1.50

DIRECTORY FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Ann Darnbrough and Derek Kinrade (Compilers)
Woodhead-Faulkner, London (1985)
358 pages. Price £11.50

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS — 1985/86

National Council for Voluntary Organisations
Bedford Square Press, London (1985)
208 pages. Price £5.95

Tutorials in general practice is a volume which I highly recommend to all general practitioners. It covers 30 case studies of the most common problems encountered in general practice. The book's practical approach is the result of the combined talents of a trainer and his trainee and this book is easy to read, factual and informative.

In the foreword attention is drawn to the fact that the conditions which general practitioners have to treat most often are those about which least is known. The case studies are presented in what initially appears to be a rather haphazard fashion; but

that is the way that patients present to us in our consulting rooms. For example, the first case describes a boy with a sore throat and this is followed by a case of acne and warts. Each chapter commences with an introductory paragraph which contains sufficient basic information for the appreciation of the significance of the case within the general practice setting.

The importance of good history taking and examination is stressed. Differential diagnoses are presented in tabular form and the text is further enhanced by several line diagrams. As each case unfolds the doctor is encouraged to anticipate the patient's train of thought by asking specific questions. Emphasis is placed on the ability of the doctor to communicate fully with the patient and the doctor is encouraged to justify his own course of action and treatment rather than simply to follow routine prescribing habits. At the end of each chapter a summary of teaching points is listed to make the maximum use of the information provided. Towards the end of the book there is a section on taking cervical smears and the importance of cytological surveillance is stressed. There is also a series of multiple choice questions complete with answers and this may help the trainee in preparation for the MRCGP examination.

Obviously no book of this size can cover every topic but a section devoted to practice administration would, in my opinion, have further enhanced this book. The book arose from joint discussions between a trainer and his trainee so it will assist trainers with their teaching.

P.K.

Case presentations in gastrointestinal disease is an interesting book written in two parts. The first part comprises two sections. The first section details 60 varied cases, dealing with diseases of the upper and lower bowel, biliary tract and pancreas, which will be of interest to both general practitioners and hospital specialists. Each case is followed by pertinent and often searching questions which test the diagnostic ability and knowledge of the reader. The second section gives case discussions and a list of laboratory values from which to judge the results given in the case histories. The second part of the book reviews eight of the topics which arose from the case histories.

The authors are to be congratulated on this book which is concise, readable and relevant. The case histories are short but adequate and the diagnostic discussion which follows is well reasoned. The reviews provide a large amount of up to date information on technology and therapy presented in an easily remembered manner.

I found that the format of the book detracted somewhat from the quality of the writing. Having read the case histories and answered the questions it is necessary to turn to another part of the book to check the answers and then to a further part for a specific discussion of that subject. I also felt that the abbrevia-

tions used should have been defined. Another useful change would have been to group similar diagnoses together.

This book is a useful addition to both the practice and the hospital library. It should appeal to those working for examinations and be helpful as a revision book.

D.G.S.

Some doctors may groan when they discover that the fifth edition of *Medicine: a guide for everybody* has been published. This book has become a standard work of popular health literature and has the hallmark of success, the demand for further editions, emblazoned on its covers. The success of this book is due to the demand of consumers for knowledge about the drugs that are prescribed by doctors and dispensed by chemists. Yet some doctors will feel that the responsibility for prescribing is theirs, and that patients should follow carefully considered advice without questioning the decisions of the doctor. But let us hope that the number of doctors holding these views is fast diminishing. The patient must be included in the decisions made about routine treatment, and the more the patient can contribute from an informed position the better. Parish's book supplies information about prescribed drugs and also about over-the-counter remedies sold in the chemist's shop.

The first half of the book consists of a number of short chapters concerned with the basic principles of the drugs used for various medical problems. The second half of the book consists of an alphabetic list of drugs (including generic and trade names), together with indications, common side-effects and contraindications. The text is clear and concise, and where appropriate, the author gives simple first choices for common ailments (for example, for a cold he recommends aspirin or paracetamol with a warning to avoid proprietary cold cures). I could find little to fault in the clarity of the text, but perhaps the author should have expanded on recent popular concern about certain drugs. There is a substantial chapter on oral contraceptives, but only a few lines about the problems of coming off tranquillizers. In addition, there is only a short section on controlled drug trials, which are now a matter of considerable public concern and misinformation.

This book should certainly be recommended to interested patients, but I think that it would also be of value to social workers or other paramedical staff who may wish to know something about the drugs that their clients (or patients) are taking.

S.A.S.

In *The parents' A-Z* Penelope Leach has set out to provide an encyclopaedic guide to child care for concerned parents. Her previous books, *Babyhood* and *Baby and Child*, have become very popular and her appearances on television mean that her common-sense advice about the problems of bringing up children is well-known. But can Penelope Leach be recommended as the British answer to Benjamin Spock? Sadly, so far as this book is concerned I think the answer is no.

The first criteria of any self-care book is that it should be easy to use. This book provides an A to Z approach by listing problems in alphabetic order. The book consists principally of a number of large sections of text dealing with subjects such as adolescence, anxiety, eating, play, safety and school. Shorter sections deal with less important problems such as feet, teeth, chicken pox and measles. Between these sections of text there are lists of references to subjects dealt with elsewhere in the book. So whether the book is used as a quick reference guide, or for the study of a particular aspect of child-care, the reader is con-

stantly checking cross-references. I suspect that Penelope Leach would like to write in broad chapters, but that she has been persuaded to write in the alphabetical format for the sake of a catchy title.

My second concern about this book is that it contains a number of examples of confused thinking. The author's ideas are perfectly sound when concerned with the behavioural aspects of child care. She lists sympathetic, practical solutions to a number of common problems which most parents will undoubtedly find of value — although she rarely mentions the role of fathers. However, when dealing with medical problems the text is sometimes confused and on occasions erroneous advice is given. For example, 'The common basis for all allergic disorders lies in the hypersensitivity of the victim's immune system to proteins (antigens) in the microorganisms which are all around us'. She then goes on to describe how someone suffering from an allergy becomes sensitive to 'harmless microorganisms' which she appears to associate with pollens or dusts. Elsewhere she suggests that if your child suffers from croup you should 'open the window so that he can breathe the cold night air' while waiting for a kettle to boil, then you let your child breathe the steam. Curious advice indeed, which clearly fails to recognize the risks of cold-induced bronchospasm. One disastrous piece of advice concerns the action you should take if you suspect that your teenage daughter has had unprotected sexual intercourse: take her to the doctor for the morning-after contraceptive pill 'if her cycles are regular and intercourse took place *more than a week after a period ended*' (my italics). A potentially dangerous misinterpretation of the timing of the fertile period.

The author should consult a medical adviser so that these pitfalls can be avoided in the next edition.

S.A.S.

In June 1983 the *That's life* television programme reported the stories of three people who felt that they had become 'hooked' on tranquillizers. The following day hundreds of viewers rang the *That's life* team to relate their experiences. Within a week over 1000 letters had been received, nearly all condemnatory. By the end of the series over 3000 had been received.

With this as a background the investigators of the *That's life* team drafted a questionnaire concerning tranquillizers, which was distributed nationally; 2150 completed questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part examined the respondents' background and the period of their lives before they began to take tranquillizers. The second and largest part dealt with why the tranquillizers were prescribed, the effects produced, the length of treatment and the methods of follow-up. The final part ascertained the number of people still taking tranquillizers, if they had tried to give them up, if they had experienced trouble in trying to give them up and where they had turned for help.

That's life — survey on tranquillizers summarizes the results of the questionnaire. It breaks down the answers into convenient sections, and devotes a chapter to each. The chapters are a mixture of selected survey results, *vox populi* extracts and comments from the authors. It is not always clear which comments are justified by the results or whether the correct conclusions are drawn.

The penultimate chapter is a reprint of a leaflet on tranquillizers, produced by the organization MIND, which is informative and helpful. The final chapter gives details of the survey and the results obtained.

I seldom watch *That's life* but this book has highlighted a problem of which I am sure most doctors are well aware. The

book is poorly written but if it shows the population for whom it is intended that not all problems can be solved by benzodiazepine treatment then it will have served a purpose.

G.F.M.

Coming off tranquillisers is a short text and is very different from the *That's life* book. In 1983 Shirley Trickett wrote to this *Journal*, in order to encourage the formation of self-help groups for people undergoing withdrawal from benzodiazepine tranquillizers. She herself is a state registered nurse and with the help of the Newcastle upon Tyne Association for Mental Health has set up a self-help group in that city. During the past two years she has seen 400 people undergoing benzodiazepine withdrawal and she has written a short book to help others in this position. The text is sensible with a wealth of useful experiences in the 70 pages.

Short sharp messages illustrated with cartoons provide practical help for withdrawal together with information about the causes, effects and management of withdrawal symptoms. Case histories are included and a glossary of useful references and addresses is appended.

The book is obtainable from SAT Publishing, P.O. Box 23, Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 1LY, price £1.50 (payable to SAT Publishing). At a cost which is less than that of a prescription this book is good value and can be safely recommended to patients.

G.F.M.

The *Directory for disabled people* must be welcomed as a comprehensive guide to the many services and opportunities which are available for disabled and handicapped people. The compilers' aim was to bring together in one volume the vast assortment of information available as leaflets, newsletters and pamphlets. They stress that such information should be available not only to professionals and carers but also to disabled people themselves. Each section of the *Directory for disabled people* covers a particular aspect of living with a disability, giving a full description of what services are available and providing a useful list of further sources of information. In this way a detailed source of reference is built up, with sections on topics such as state benefits, the house and home, education, employment, holidays, leisure activities, sexual and personal relationships and legislation. There are also chapters listing and describing the activities of over 200 helpful organizations. All the material has been collected, checked at source and expanded where necessary.

The directory provides disabled people with access to the information they need if they are to lead full and fulfilling lives. I have used and browsed through the pages of this volume and recommend it for practice libraries. Better still it could be placed in treatment rooms or reception areas where ancillary staff could make it available to patients with special needs.

N.C.H.S.

Voluntary organisations — 1985/86 is another directory which practices should have in waiting rooms or reception areas. Now in its 57th year of production this little text has over 800 organizations listed alphabetically with addresses, objectives and publications. Diabetics, epileptics, the bereaved, the handicapped, the deaf, minority groups and others will find useful contacts for self-help. Most practitioners have patients whose quality of life could be improved by such contacts.

N.C.H.S.

BOOKS RECEIVED

OXFORD HANDBOOK OF CLINICAL MEDICINE

R.A. Hope and J.M. Longmore, Oxford University Press, 1985. 724 pages. Price £6.95

THE WELLBEING OF THE ELDERLY. APPROACHES TO MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASSESSMENT

Gerda G. Fillenbaum, World Health Organization, Geneva, 1984. 99 pages

ASPIRIN SYMPOSIUM 1983 NO. 71

Jean Hallam, L. Goldman and G.R. Fryers (Eds), Royal Society of Medicine, London, and Oxford University Press, 1985. 87 pages. Price £10.00

THOUGHT AND ACTION IN SOCIAL POLICY. SOCIAL CONCERNS FOR THE 1980's

Helga Nowotny (Ed), European Centre for Social Welfare Training and Research, Austria, 1984. 359 pages

THE DOCTOR. CHERRYSTONES SERIES

Anne Stewart, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1985. 24 pages. Price £3.75

AIDS TO RADIOLOGICAL DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS

Stephen Chapman and Richard Nakielny, Balliere Tindall, London, 1984. 375 pages. Price £8.50

MALARIA CONTROL AS PART OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Report of a WHO study group, World Health Organization, Technical Report series 712, Geneva, 1984. 73 pages

BRAIN'S CLINICAL NEUROLOGY. SIXTH EDITION

Revised by Sir Roger Bannister, Oxford University Press, 1985. 563 pages. Price £30.00 h/b, £12.50 p/b

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR EYES

Robert Youngson, Sheldon Press, London, 1985. 117 pages. Price £2.50

ACUTE PAIN

Graham Smith and Benjamin G. Covino (Eds), Butterworths, London, 1985. 283 pages