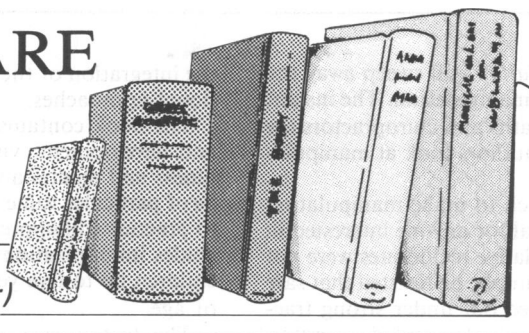


PRIMARY CARE BOOK SHELF



G.F. MORGAN
C.A. LONG
M.E. BARKER
A.G. HIBBLE
J.V. MITCHELL
E.J. LAZDA

NIGEL STOTT (Reviews Editor)

GENERAL PRACTICE MEDICINE (2nd edition)

J.H. Barber (Ed)
Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London (1984)
389 pages. Price £19.00

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES: A GUIDE TO COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE FOR THE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

G.T. Lewith (Ed)
Heinemann Medical Books, London (1985)
223 pages. Price £9.95

AN INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL MANIPULATION

John Paterson and Loic Burn
MTP Press, Lancaster (1985)
198 pages. Price £14.95

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN DISEASE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

R. Masironi and H. Denolin (Eds)
Piccin/Butterworths, Sevenoaks, Kent (1985)
206 pages. Price £27.00

COMMUNITY PAEDIATRICS

Leon Polnay and David Hull
Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London (1985)
353 pages. Price £20.00

A CONCISE GUIDE TO THE MANAGEMENT OF POISONING (3rd edition)

J.A. Vale and T.J. Meredith
Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London (1985)
222 pages. Price £7.95

General practice medicine is the second edition of a textbook previously published in 1975. It has been written for the vocational trainee and is intended to provide knowledge on which the trainee can build. This multi-author book has been edited by Professor Barber and most of the authors are general practitioners based in Scotland. After introductory chapters by the editor and a well-constructed chapter by David Hannay on interviewing and counselling skills, the remainder of the book is largely 'system based'. This gives it a superficial similarity to many medical textbooks. Inevitably the chapters vary both in quality and detail as do the accompanying reference lists. A bias towards Scotland is inevitable but it is strange that several important national reports have been omitted.

Printing or proof reading errors abound. At best this is irritating — 'date' instead of 'dose' on a repeat prescription card — but at worst confusing — in William Bassett's chapter on

paediatrics, the substitution of 'likely' for 'unlikely' in the time involvement for developmental screening completely alters the meaning. Similarly, references to 'hypotension' instead of 'hypertension' can trap the unwary.

The inclusion of a chapter by Joyce Watson on the problems of solvent abuse, demonstrate that the book has been updated, but there is no mention of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

To compile a book about all aspects of primary care is difficult. Too little detail and it appears superficial and simplistic, too much and it becomes unwieldy. This book concentrates purely on the clinical aspects of general practice and as such is incomplete, but in fairness it does not claim to be comprehensive.

General practice medicine has 350 clear double-column pages and an extensive index. At £19.00 it represents good value for money but trainees will have to read beyond it to cover their syllabus.

G.F.M.

'Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few others to be chewed and digested' wrote Francis Bacon. *Alternative therapies: a guide to complementary medicine for the health professionals* falls into the latter category. The book lends itself to reading from cover to cover and there is much to whet the appetite of the reader and stimulate thought and interest.

Its publication is timely as more patients are becoming aware of these modes of treatment. We owe it to our patients to have some knowledge, if not experience, of this field so that sound advice can be given should it be necessary. All medical and paramedical professionals should welcome this authoritative text as a means of gaining comprehensive insight into current practices in complementary medicine.

The book is a well-presented and conveniently sized paperback. The chapters on acupuncture and transcutaneous nerve stimulation, manipulation, biofeedback and meditation, homeopathic medicine and clinical ecology are each written by an experienced practitioner. Dr G.T. Lewith, co-director of the Centre for the Study of Alternative Therapies, Southampton, is both the editor of the book and a contributor. The authors discuss their chosen subject clearly, methodically and enthusiastically, yet retain an open mind and a critical perspective. They present an objective analysis of their claims and methods. The content and candour of the reviews should make any reader take notice of and examine the real potential of these modes of treatment. Each chapter has references and useful information about reputable bodies concerned with practice and teaching in these areas.

Alternative therapies fulfills its aim to inform health professionals about the state of the art in the five most widely practised areas of complementary or alternative medicine.

C.A.L.

An introduction to medical manipulation will sweep away the mystery and mythology surrounding manipulation. The instant cures apparently produced by osteopaths and chiropractors are put into perspective as two medical authors look at manipulation in general practice.

The late Dr James Cyriax did much to make manipulation respectable and his books are essential for anyone interested in this field. Unfortunately his manipulative techniques were not applicable to general practice. For example, he insisted that safe spinal manipulation should be carried out under strong traction yet this is impossible for the single-handed operator. Manipulation has been successfully performed for centuries by the unqualified with little understanding of spinal anatomy. Using the techniques described in this book general practitioners can develop these skills. My criticism is that the first four chapters are complex and may deter all but the most determined reader. The first 100 pages are badly presented with no line drawings or photographs.

The authors discuss osteopathy, chiropractic and the neurology and physiology of pain. They also put into perspective the use of X-rays, corsets, collars, exercises, injections, acupuncture, rhizotomy and sclerosant injections. Their views are straightforward and relevant to general practice.

The best of this book is left until last — the second half contains an excellent presentation of the practical techniques used by the authors. The techniques are described clearly and the accompanying photographs and line drawings are superb.

M.E.B.

The standard advice of our professional forebears was based on fresh air, good food, hygiene and exercise. It would no doubt amuse them to know that these concepts have now received the imprimatur of twentieth century science.

Despite its title, *Physical activity in disease prevention and management*, over half of this book is concerned with method of study and normal physiology. It is not until page 117 that epidemiological data is presented to demonstrate the usefulness or otherwise of exercise in the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease, and in the secondary prevention of cardiovascular, metabolic and lung disorders. Each section is well summarized and is relevant to the preventive aspects of general practice. The chapter on how and what to prescribe is well presented, clear in its advice and fully supported with references.

Sports are classified into three groups, the best having the lowest level of stress associated with the optimum level of physical fitness. The first group, predictably, includes long distance running. Cycling, cross country skiing and swimming are in the second group. All other sports, including hill walking and gymnastics, are in the inferior third group.

No modern text would be complete without a chapter concerning psychology. However, this chapter has few references and is a poor tailpiece to the book.

For those with a personal interest or wishing to enlarge their relevant knowledge this book is worth borrowing from the local postgraduate library.

A.G.H.

Community paediatrics is the third book in a series from the Department of Child Health at the University of Nottingham. The previous books *Essential paediatrics* and *Hospital paediatrics* were aimed at the undergraduate and the junior hospital doctor, respectively. This book is aimed at general practitioners and others working with children in the community. Like its predecessors it is based on teaching material (some of which has been accumulated locally) used by the department. It is concerned with the care of the child in the community and

the integration of the medical approach with social and educational approaches.

The book contains chapters on genetic counselling, growth and development, vision, hearing and speech, long standing illness and mental and physical handicaps; these chapters will be of particular value to the established practitioner. New-comers to practice will appreciate the chapters on infection (which includes immunization), nutrition and problems encountered in children up to five years of age and between five and 15 years of age.

The text is easy to read and the book is generally well illustrated. It contains all the facts necessary for day to day practice and it is well indexed. However, it cannot replace a larger paediatric text as a reference work. Each chapter concludes with suggestions for further reading.

Paediatric textbooks have improved greatly in the last 10 years. Today's undergraduates and postgraduates, either in vocational training or studying for higher qualifications, should consider themselves very fortunate that such texts are available.

J.V.M.

A concise guide to the management of poisoning is a pocket sized book, written by a senior medical registrar and a clinical pharmacologist. It aims to provide 'an up-to-date and comprehensive guide to the management of the poisoned patient'.

The introductory chapter on the general management of poisoning presents facts and figures and then goes on to discuss what is, for the general practitioner, the central decision in the management of a poisoned patient, whether or not to admit the patient to hospital. It is reassuring to know that 80% of all poisoned patients who are admitted to hospital will recover with no more than general nursing care. The remainder of the chapter, on the diagnosis and general management of significant degrees of poisoning, would have been of great value in my houseman days but is of less relevance now. The authors' statement that 'it is reasonable to assume, until proven otherwise, that a patient in a coma, aged 15-55, has taken a drug overdose' may have statistical validity but I would be reluctant to apply it to individual cases. The introductory chapter ends with a paragraph on prevention; all those involved in primary health care should be aware of the points covered.

The remainder of the book consists of short summaries of the clinical features and management of poisoning by a wide variety of pharmaceutical, industrial and biological agents. The information concerning industrial and plant poisons is particularly valuable, as a general practitioner is unlikely to have either a ready source of reference or much knowledge on the subject. I would have liked to see some indication of the quantities of the various poisons likely to cause significant intoxication, although I appreciate the difficulties involved. Some colour plates to assist in the identification of plants and fungi would be helpful, perhaps collected as a companion volume.

The chapters on poisoning by marine animals and snakes make interesting reading and are essential for completeness, but are not particularly relevant to general practice in the United Kingdom. The authors tell us that the puffer fish (fugu) is the most poisonous fish in the world, but do not mention that it is an expensive and highly prized delicacy in Japan, the poison being concentrated in a gland which must be removed whole by government-licensed chefs prior to cooking.

This little book contains a mine of information about poisoning. It deserves a place, if not in the pocket of the house physician, then certainly on the bookshelf of the casualty department or acute medical ward. Its claim to a place in the practice library is less strong. It is good to dip into for information, but does not contain the necessary detail to be a good reference text.

E.J.L.