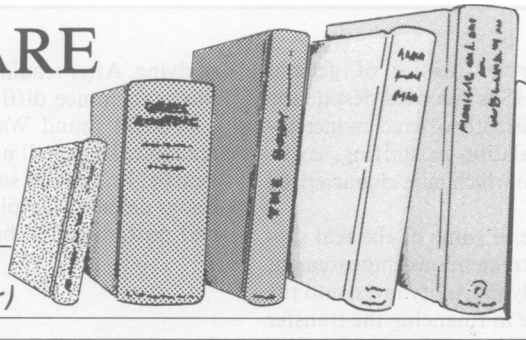


PRIMARY CARE BOOK SHELF

NIGEL STOTT (Reviews Editor)



J. CULE
B.A. RUDDY
T.C. O'DOWD
G.T. LEWTH

WILLIAM WITHERING AND THE FOXGLOVE

Ronald D. Mann (Ed)
MTP Press, Lancaster (1986)
178 pages. Price £79.95

IN THAT CASE

Medical ethics in everyday practice
Alastair V. Campbell and Roger Higgs
Darton, Longman and Todd, London (1982)
124 pages. Price £4.50

HEALTH CARE UK — 1986

An economic, social and policy audit
Anthony Harrison and John Gretton (Eds)
Policy Journals, Newbury, Berks (1986)
119 pages. Price £29.50

HEADACHE

Series in clinical epidemiology
William Estlin Waters
Croom Helm, London (1986)
156 pages. Price £17.95

HEADACHE

Clinical medicine and the nervous system
Richard Peatfield
Springer-Verlag, Berlin (1986)
178 pages. Price £36.00

EXAMINATION OF THE BACK

An introduction
John K. Paterson and Loic Burn
MTP Press, Lancaster (1986)
127 pages. Price £14.95

Sir William Osler bequeathed to the Royal Society of Medicine his collection of William Withering's letters and memorabilia, which he had acquired just over a year before his death. It had come his way when 'a man came in one day with a bag and said "Are you interested in William Withering?"' then pulled out a big bundle of letters and papers, rapidly accepting the offer of £20 because he had only expected to get £5. As the Italians would say '*forse non è vero' ma è ben trovato*', for Sir William Hale-White (1857-1949) in discussing the Osler bequest before the Section of the History of Medicine of the Royal Society of Medicine in 1929 gave the rather more mundane account that Sir William Osler had, in fact, bought the collection from 'a well-known antiquarian bookseller'.

The preface to *William Withering and the foxglove* states that it is mainly intended to be a source book. The book contains a transcribed selection of 76 letters from the collection at the Royal Society of Medicine, with some also in facsimile. In the editing the style has been brought up to date although 'every effort has been made to retain as much as possible of the flavour of the original'.

Books have now reached a price to deter the impulse buyer and to attract Sir William Osler this book would have had to have been more attractively bound and the print quality improved.

J.C.

In that case. Medical ethics in everyday practice is an important little book for all members of the primary health care team because it has the flavour of daily reality with sensitive ethical and moral questioning of familiar situations. This practical and lively introduction to the ethics of health care is a masterpiece of clarity and breadth.

Alastair Campbell and Roger Higgs are both well known and respected for their writings and teachings — Campbell as Senior Lecturer in Christian Ethics at Edinburgh University and Higgs as Director of the Department of General Practice Studies at Kings College Hospital Medical School. Their combined professional and personal experience has been condensed into a text which is academic and practical, deep and sensitive.

Why has it taken four years to bring this book to the attention of *Journal* readers? Partly because it has taken me nearly three years to decide to include occasional older texts which are of sufficient merit to bring to readers attention afresh.

This book is a meritorious monograph of multidisciplinary relevance, written by two people with insight into many elements of what is sometimes referred to as the holistic approach to patient care. It is a good book for course organizers and trainers to introduce to their trainees provided time is allocated for group work and debate of the many issues raised.

N.C.H.S.

Health care UK — 1986 contains a wealth of historic narrative and statistical illustration which makes it, at first sight, a daunting prospect to most prospective readers, especially those called upon to read report after report as part of their professional lives. However, it is an invaluable compendium of articles providing information, analysis and comment which would not be easy to find elsewhere. Anyone seriously concerned with the health care of the nation should take advantage of this publication.

The major point which echoes throughout almost every contribution is the lack of a central or nationwide policy on health care. 'School health' makes the point that health authorities are unsure of their responsibilities. The article 'Local authority accommodation for the elderly' points to the absence of a code of practice on the issue. 'GPs as firms' bewails the total lack of incentive for general practitioners to invest in preventive care. The article concerning manpower planning for nurses discusses the lack of an established policy — despite the fact that nurses constitute one third of the total National Health Service

work-force. Sadly, perhaps, the virtual demise of general ophthalmic services as part of the NHS is recorded despite the fact that this is one service which consistently offered an increasing level of output without the escalation in staffing, costs, waiting lists and growing dissatisfaction which have characterized the rest of the NHS.

At the same time there is reference to some of the real successes of the NHS, for example the tremendous improvement in maternity services and consequently mortality rates, and the sensible approach of the Welsh Office in financing the transfer of care of the mentally handicapped to the community. It is also made clear that 'cut backs' are not confined to any one political party.

Topically, in view of the Government's green paper *Primary health care: an agenda for discussion*, there is a punchy article from Nick Bosanquet of York on the function of general practitioners and primary health care teams. This makes a number of accurate and telling points with regard to the need to establish a mechanism for quality assurance, to make the 'team' a reality and to provide the services the public need rather than just those for which there is reimbursement. Bosanquet points out too the very real role that family practitioner committees have to play as facilitators — given the trust of general practitioners. All general practitioners should read this article — with the scales pulled well back from their eyes.

Health care UK — 1986 should have a place on the bookshelf of every NHS professional, but not until it has been exhaustively read.

B.A.R.

The two books entitled *Headache*, one by William Estlin Waters and the other by Richard Peatfield, compliment each other well. Waters the epidemiologist describes the denominator and Peatfield the neurologist describes the numerator.

Professor Waters has a fine track record in epidemiological research and this book brings together many of the questions and some of the answers that he has uncovered in his work. On the surface it is about headache but anyone who wants research method to come alive for them should read this book. Waters details the difference between a population study and a clinical study and between the numerator and the denominator. He gives a readable account of the problems of drafting a questionnaire and the need to understand the patois of the population under investigation. The response rates of his studies are legendary and anyone reading this book will understand why. He generates many thoughtful questions and who could quibble with him that questions like prognosis are poorly dealt with in medicine.

Peatfield's book on the other hand deals with the assessment and management of headache from personal experience of working in a general neurology outpatient department and in a specialist migraine clinic. It is a textbook in the classical vein, well referenced, authoritative and well laid out. There is much about migraine, and pathophysiology is dealt with in great detail. For its denominator the book relies on Waters' work. Predictably, there is much more about treatment in Peatfield's book than in Waters' book and this reflects the different philosophies of the two authors, their faith in medicines, and proximity to the patient in distress.

In his chapter on approaching the patient Peatfield gives a list of 12 themes that should be pursued with the patient. They are doctor centred and nowhere does he allow the patient to tell him what he or she thinks is causing the headaches.

One of Waters's studies shows that patients with headaches in the year preceding the study did not have an increased risk

of dying. After reading Peatfield's book the clinician might find this reassurance difficult to accept.

While I found Waters' book provocative, stimulating and readable, I can well understand clinicians preferring to refer to Peatfield's book to solve their diagnostic dilemmas. These two books deserve their places on the shelves of interested clinicians' and postgraduate libraries.

T.O'D.

Examination of the back is one of a pair of recently published books, its companion being *An introduction to medical manipulation*. *Examination of the back* provides an excellent introduction for general practitioners who wish to pursue a 'hands-off approach' to musculoskeletal illness. The examination of the musculoskeletal system is generally poorly taught in medical schools and as a consequence many general practitioners know little about the examination of the back. Whatever is found on detailed examination, the treatment is usually either urgent referral for a neurological or orthopaedic opinion, or conservative management with rest, analgesics and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents.

This text is for those who have an interest in examining the back in some detail, and who wish to use physical treatment, such as injection or manipulation, to alleviate the patient's suffering. The text is clear, concise and well illustrated. The initial chapters introducing the physiology of pain provide a good review of this field using physiology to point out some of the pitfalls of conventional examination. The sections on the classification of back pain provide a clear framework upon which to base diagnosis and therapy. The chapters on the detailed examination of the cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine are concise and informative, if a little didactic on occasions. The combination of text and simple diagrams allows the reader to absorb a vast amount of information quickly and simply.

This book makes a valuable contribution to the field of medical manipulation.

G.T.L.

COLLEGE PUBLICATIONS

The following publications can be obtained from the Central Sales Office, Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, London SW7 1PU. All prices include postage and payment should be made with order.

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

The Future General Practitioner — Learning and Teaching	£10.50*
Epidemiology and Research in a General Practice	£10.50
A History of the Royal College of General Practitioners	£12.00†
RCGP Members' Reference Book 1985	£17.50
Present State and Future Needs in General Practice	£5.50
Doctors Talking to Patients	£10.50
Notes for Lecturers	£1.00
Epidemiology in Country Practice	£5.50‡
Will Pickles of Wensleydale	£10.50‡
Handbook of Preventive Care for Pre-school Children	£1.00
Trends in General Practice Computing	£12.50
In Pursuit of Quality	£15.00
Sir James Mackenzie MD	£12.50
Prevention and the Primary Care Team	£3.00

* £1.00 and † £2.00 less for members of the College

‡ If ordered together, these two books can be obtained at the reduced price of £13.00.