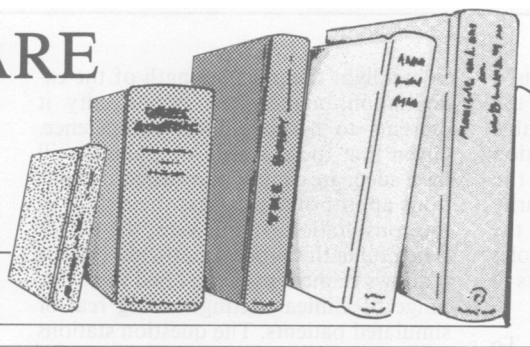


# PRIMARY CARE BOOK SHELF



## SCREENING FOR RISK OF CORONARY HEART DISEASE

*Michael Oliver, Michael Ashley-Miller and David Wood (Eds)*  
*John Wiley, Chichester (1987)*  
128 pages. Price £14.00

This is a report of a workshop on strategies for screening organized jointly by the Cardiovascular Research Unit of Edinburgh University and the Chief Scientist's Office of the Scottish Home and Health Department in November 1985. Thirty-three participants are listed, including two general practitioners, Hamish Barber and James McCormick. Barber describes screening and follow-up of hypertension. This is almost irrelevant to the control of coronary heart disease unless it is part of a multiple-risks approach and the discussion which follows is unexciting. This is not a book for general practitioners to buy, but is worth reading if your postgraduate centre gets a copy.

As usual, troops in the field are heavily outnumbered by general staff. The generals have little confidence in their men, and are still leisurely arguing about whether any war is really necessary. Fred Epstein, the most experienced of all cardiovascular epidemiologists and by no means uncritical of the breathless credulity of cardiovascular screening as practised in the USA, contributes an excellent two pages of original ideas, firmly concluding that 'Present knowledge provides a solid base for a concerted programme of preventive action, employing both population and high-risk strategies, with the attendant need for screening'. I was unable to find any other contributor who supported him. Jerry Shaper rightly affirms that 'fundamental changes in attitude, training, finance, team organization and facilities are required if case-finding for high-risk individuals and early coronary disease is to be effectively organized', but this theme is then neither elaborated nor seriously discussed.

The book ends with the editors' conclusions, including: 'No screening is necessary to identify cigarette smokers, those who are overweight, and do not exercise'. If, but only if, these people are not to be given any personal help by doctors or nurses in primary care, that statement is true and explains a lot about what we are really up against. Can it be that the hitherto undiscovered fourth major risk factor for coronary disease is cardiologists?

JULIAN TUDOR HART

*General Practitioner, Glyncoirwg, West Glamorgan*

## STROKES

**Practical clinical medicine series**

*C. Warlow*

*MTP Press, Lancaster (1987)*

229 pages. Price £29.95 h/b, £15.95 p/b

There have been a number of books about stroke published recently, from rather superficial paperbacks to weighty tomes. This book is neither. It provides a useful and readable account for the general practitioner and general physician to whom it

is directed but should also be attractive to a wider audience.

The epidemiology, aetiology and diagnosis of strokes are comprehensively covered and the need for primary and secondary prevention is correctly emphasized. One of its particular strengths is the space given to the description of the natural history and longitudinal management of strokes including the importance of the needs of carers.

It is refreshing to read a book which pays as much attention to community care as to hospital medicine. Some of its recommendations for primary care management may prove difficult to follow because of lack of resources but few would argue with the principles. Its list of references is rather short but it does not suffer as a result. It is highly recommended.

BRIAN PENTLAND

*Consultant Neurologist, Astley Ainslie Hospital, Edinburgh*

## ULCER AND NON-ULCER DYSPEPSIAS

**Practical clinical medicine series**

*M. Lancaster-Smith (Ed)*

*MTP Press, Lancaster (1987)*

158 pages. Price £29.00 h/b, £12.50 p/b.

This is a compact, well presented book divided into four sections — pathophysiology of peptic ulcer, oesophagitis, peptic ulcer and non-ulcer dyspepsia. Written by hospital specialists, a good deal of the book is concerned with the fundamental physiology and pathology of the above conditions. The ground is covered authoritatively and in depth, with no less than 18 pages of references. While providing a comprehensive review of the subject, the book is more suited to the final year medical student, houseman or senior house officer revising for an examination than to the practising general practitioner dealing with a patient's vague dyspepsia.

Even though the aim of this book is to narrow the gap between researchers and generalists, it would undoubtedly have benefited from a greater general practice input. For me, this omission mars what would otherwise be a useful volume on a common presenting symptom.

MICHAEL MEAD

*General Practitioner, Leicestershire*

## IN A MAN'S WORLD

**Essays on women in male dominated professions**

*Anne Spencer and David Podmore (Eds)*

*Tavistock Publications, London (1986)*

240 pages. Price £8.95

The essays in this book cover the civil service, personnel management, NHS administration, scientists in the NHS, the legal profession, academics, general practitioners and engineers.