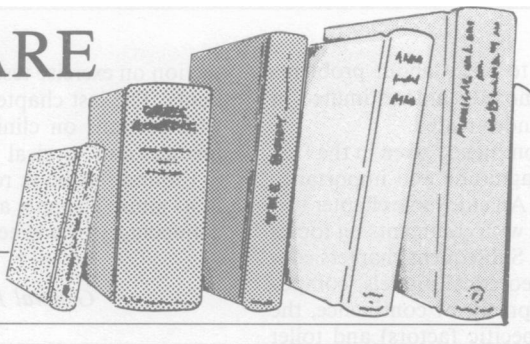


PRIMARY CARE BOOK SHELF



ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

A practical guide to its management and nature (2nd edition)

Keith Hawton and Jose Catalan

Oxford University Press (1987)

211 pages. Price £12.50

In the 1960s and first half of the 1970s the increase in the incidence of deliberate self-poisoning and self-injury was dramatic and although the peak has passed, the problem remains large and difficult for both hospital and primary care teams involved in immediate and long term management. It is reassuring, therefore, to find a small practical volume which addresses the complexities of attempted suicide with assurance and enthusiasm.

The authors explain the imperfect terminology in the field. The text describes patterns of self-harm and the psychosocial factors; detailed assessment; various 'therapies' with histories; organization of care; and prevention. I would have liked to have seen more on alcohol and socioeconomic difficulties but accept that any change of emphasis would upset a balance which is fine in both senses.

The writing is clear, concise and attractively free of jargon. It seems the authors are in tune with their subject and are optimistic enough to suggest primary and secondary prevention. The book is well researched and referenced and has enough depth and breadth to serve the dual purpose that small volumes attempt but seldom achieve.

Attempted suicide frequently arouses emotional bias and tries the patience and it is a credit to the authors' experience and empathy that such a well balanced practical guide has been produced. This second edition of *Attempted suicide* is an essential book for the enlightened training practice.

J. PARK

General Practitioner, Bo'ness, West Lothian

BEHAVIORAL COUNSELING IN MEDICINE

Strategies for modifying at-risk behavior

Michael L. Russell

Oxford University Press (1986)

327 pages. Price £25.00

Detecting our patients' unhealthy life styles is easy, but helping to modify them can be extremely difficult. This American text addresses this problem and it is described as an essential resource for clinicians in behavioural medicine, health psychologists, behavioural therapists, family practitioners and physician's assistants.

The first half of the book aims to provide a basic understanding of the counselling process. The remaining chapters present staged applications of behavioural counselling for specific health related behavioural problems: diet, weight control, physical inactivity, smoking, stress and non-compliance with medication. The book does not seek to minimize the scale of the problems

involved and gives an insight into the resources that can be devoted to solving them. However, it is lengthy and very prescriptive, both in its approach to patients and clinicians. It contains few references.

This book would be a helpful resource to a teacher planning a course for doctors and nurses or to others involved in health education; but the approaches described would require major adaptation before being of value in everyday practice.

T.P.C. SCHOFIELD

General Practitioner, Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire

AN OUTLINE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS AND PRACTITIONERS

Harold Maxwell (Ed)

Wright, Bristol (1986)

107 pages. Price £6.25

In this small, quickly read and easily digested volume, Harold Maxwell and seven colleagues give outlines of several forms of psychotherapy as applied to individuals, families and groups in various settings. Each chapter has its own reading list and some give additional information on professional groups and training courses.

Some of the chapters are excellent, including those by David Alexander on psychodynamic therapy, Andrew Elder on psychotherapy in general practice, Alan Cooklin on family therapy and Dick Blackwell on group therapy. There are other chapters on medical students' feelings, liaison psychiatry and behaviour therapy but these are less well written and not as useful or informative as one might have expected.

Overall the book has a psychodynamic feel to it. No mention was made of client-centred psychotherapy, among the best researched of all 'talk' therapies; and cognitive therapy, so useful for anxieties or depression, was given just three paragraphs. Both are major developments in psychotherapy and deserved chapters to themselves.

These points aside, I liked the book and commend it to medical students and practitioners and to others who want an introduction to psychotherapy before pursuing the field in more depth.

PETER HOLDEN

Principal Clinical Psychologist, St Clement's Hospital, Ipswich

CONTINENCE AND INCONTINENCE

Psychological approaches to development and treatment

Paul S. Smith and Linda J. Smith

Croom Helm, London (1987)

280 pages. Price £22.50

A book with this title is not likely to be in the general practitioner's top 20 reading list. This is a pity, for this small and ex-

cellently referenced work has much to teach about problems which I suspect are much underdiagnosed, underestimated in their severity and almost certainly undertreated.

The prevalence rates of urinary incontinence given in the first two tables of the book reveal the magnitude and importance of the problem of childhood enuresis. An enjoyable chapter two provides an excellent historical review with comments on topics such as toilet design and old remedies. Subsequent chapters consider the function of micturition, theoretical models, component skills and the sequential development of continence, the roles of maturation and learning (specific factors) and toilet training. For general practitioners the most useful chapters concern the common problem of nocturnal enuresis, the less common problem of encopresis and particularly useful are the chapters on the continence problems of adults and the loss of continence associated with dementia.

Although the remit of this volume is clearly a consideration of the psychological aspects of continence problems, physical aspects are only briefly mentioned. A short account of these would have been useful. For example, the treatment of associated physical problems and the use of continence aids provide a considerable, psychological boost to the disabled.

This is an important book, covering an area which is not well dealt with in medical teaching. It is perhaps a luxury for the practice library, but it is certainly worth borrowing.

W.J. BASSETT

General Practitioner, Livingston, West Lothian

AIDS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF INCONTINENCE: A CRITICAL REVIEW

Project paper 65

Bernadette Ryan-Woolley

King's Fund, London (1987)

55 pages. Price £1.50

This short booklet is an excellent guide to the hundreds of different aids which are available for the management of incontinence. Along with clear diagrams it provides a concise description of all the products, the rationale for their use, supply and availability, storage and disposal and cost-effectiveness. There are also details of clinical trials and other research which supports the efficacy of the aids. Although intended principally as a practical guide for continence nurse advisers and community nurses, general practitioners will find this a useful text.

E. GRAHAM BUCKLEY
Editor of the Journal

CORONARY HEART DISEASE

Practical clinical medicine series

G. Sandler (Ed)

MTP Press, Lancaster (1987)

132 pages. Price £29.50 h/b, £10.50 p/b

The *Practical clinical medicine series* aims to bridge the gap between researcher and practising clinicians. *Coronary heart disease* consists of four chapters, each a paper by different authors, all of whom are experts in their field. It provides, with about four hours reading, an up-to-date account of the subject.

The first chapter reviews the management of heart attacks in the pre-hospital, hospital and post-discharge phases. The role of the general practitioner in admitting the patient quickly in the acute phase is noted, and his subsequent role in rehabilitation is stressed. Chapter two deals with the general practitioner's role in the prevention of both primary and secondary coronary artery disease.

The third chapter is a full review of the rehabilitation of patients who have had a previous infarction. It includes an excellent

section on exercise testing, and the value of exercise in such patients. The last chapter deals with the management of angina, with sections on clinical features, differential diagnosis, and medical and surgical management.

I found this book readable and informative. It succeeds well in its aims. The only addition I would suggest would be a short commentary by a general practitioner at the end of each section.

M.G. SADLER

General Practitioner, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

INTERSECTORAL ACTION FOR HEALTH

The role of intersectoral cooperation in national strategies for health for all

World Health Organization, Geneva (1986)

152 pages. Price Sw.fr.24.-

At first glance it would appear that this book is only relevant to those working in developing countries, and in that context it is a powerful advancement of the principles agreed at the Alma-Ata conference in 1978. However, the conference made primary health care its main focus and this book contains a great deal that is directly relevant to general practice with the current trend towards a preventive approach to health and also the conceptual changes in the definitions of health in relation to quality of life.

Inequalities in health care are of major concern in many developed countries and this book emphasizes an equity-oriented health strategy firmly based in primary health care. To achieve the promotion of health there must be coordination and cooperation between various agencies, and an example of this need for intersectoral action in a developed country could be in dealing with the problems of an ageing population.

Throughout the book the emphasis is on health-related policies and it is a timely reminder that priorities in health care should be dictated by the health status of specific age groups rather than administrative or financial objectives which are only the means of achieving improvement in health.

J.S. BERKELEY

Medical Officer, Grampian Health Board

OXFORD TEXTBOOK OF MEDICINE (2nd edition)

D.J. Wetherall, J.G.G. Legingham and D.A. Warrell (Eds)

Oxford University Press (1987)

3660 pages. Price £75.00

The appearance of the first edition of the *Oxford Textbook of Medicine* was a major event in British medicine and its success has led to the publication of the second edition only four years later. The new edition is larger with 150 new chapters and an additional 960 pages. There are new sections on medical genetics, the acquired immune deficiency syndrome, the eye and immunology and there have been improvements in the layout with an increase in the number of illustrations.

For general practitioners this is the ideal source of reference when dealing with patients with unusual problems. The book is comprehensive, well written and succinct. Despite its rapid progress to a second edition, however, it is still difficult for a book of this size to keep up-to-date with changes in treatment and there are better sources for recent advances in therapeutics.

This British textbook deserves to be the standard reference book on medicine and should be one of the essential items in a practice library. The price may seem high but is undoubtedly good value for the amount of material contained in the two volumes.

E. GRAHAM BUCKLEY
Editor of the Journal