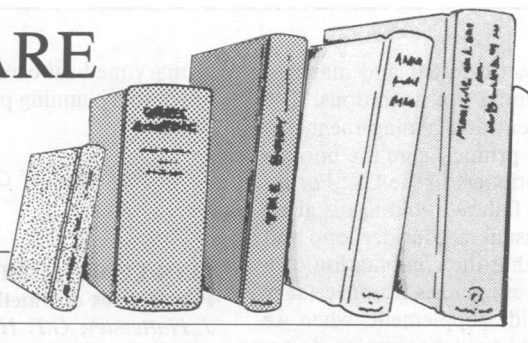


# PRIMARY CARE BOOK SHELF



## CANCER PAIN

*M. Swerdlow and V. Ventafridda (Eds)*

*MTP Press, Lancaster (1987)*

*196 pages. Price £25.95 h/b; £14.95 p/b*

In recent years there has been a spate of books on the terminal care of patients with cancer, but *Cancer pain* focuses on the single symptom that may dominate the last days of the patient and yet can be alleviated in most cases by a rational approach to treatment. This book by 13 contributors is divided into four sections: basic aspects of cancer pain; assessment; treatment; terminal care.

The two chapters by Kathleen Foley on assessment of pain and pain syndromes give clear and concise guidance in establishing an accurate diagnosis as the key to appropriate treatment. The core chapter of the book on drug therapy is based on the World Health Organization international consensus on cancer pain and is preceded by a valuable chapter on therapeutic strategy by Vittorio Ventafridda. The chapters on oncological, nerve blocking and neurosurgical modalities in pain relief will be of only academic interest to general practitioners but they indicate the spectrum of specialist treatment available for the 10–20% of patients whose pain is not controlled by drugs.

The one striking omission in this book is any reference to diamorphine when considering the strong opioid analgesics. Indeed, the advice to give morphine subcutaneously is impractical because of the volume of drug required for many patients on high doses of morphine; for diamorphine the volumes required are smaller. With this exception, I would strongly recommend this book to general practitioners.

JOHN S. BERKELEY

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Aberdeen*

## SAFE SPACE

*How to survive in a threatening world*

*Anthony Fry*

*J.M. Dent and Sons, London (1987)*

*178 pages. Price £12.95*

In *Safe space* Dr Anthony Fry leads his readers through an exploration of balance and imbalance in life and society. 'Safe space' is the term he uses to describe the places and situations where the individual feels in harmony. Disharmony is shown to have far-reaching effects on health, the community and the environment.

He extends the holistic approach beyond the individual to encompass the world. Parochial concepts are expanded and readers are invited to develop new all-embracing philosophies with the responsibilities these entail. Society's values are analysed and found wanting. The football hooligan and the whizz-kid financier are shown to have similar disturbing traits: male, aggressive tendencies are inadequately balanced by the female, caring ones in striving for profits and power.

It has all happened before, and in other cultures. Will we have to pay the price for the desecration of our world? Will a generation with new codes of chivalry develop in time to change our attitudes and way of life? *Safe space* presents an insight from which a whole philosophy has been developed which can be applied universally. Undoubtedly this book constitutes an important addition to the literature.

C.W.G. ANGUS

*General Practitioner, Rosyth, Fife*

## POST-VIRAL FATIGUE SYNDROME

*The saga of Royal Free disease*

*A. Melvin Ramsay*

*Gower Medical Publishing, London (for the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association) (1987)*

*64 pages. Price £3.50*

With all the recent publicity in the media, many general practitioners will find their patients asking questions about myalgic encephalomyelitis or the post-viral fatigue syndrome that they cannot easily answer. Here at least is the first authoritative book on the subject which general practitioners can read quickly in order to keep abreast of their patient's knowledge of this baffling but increasingly common illness. With the benefit of unrivalled experience in the field, Dr Ramsay has confidently marshalled the evidence and put together the facts which will convince even the most sceptical of doctors that the cause of myalgic encephalomyelitis, popularly known as Royal Free disease, was not conversion history. In particular the chapters headed 'Research projects' and 'Discussion' should be required reading for all doctors who still believe that myalgic encephalomyelitis is all in the mind.

Dr Ramsay's views on infectivity also merit serious consideration. He rightly draws attention to the rapidly growing literature on the chronic mononucleosis syndrome and identifies both the Epstein-Barr and Cocksackie group B viruses as potent aetiological agents in the post-viral infection syndrome.

CELIA WOOKEY

*General Practitioner, Mill Hill, London*

## CARDIOVASCULAR CARE OF THE ELDERLY

*T. Strasser (Ed)*

*World Health Organization, Geneva (1987)*

*161 pages. Price Sw. fr. 29.00*

The World Health Organization has set up a programme to look at the health of the elderly and to produce technical guides on specific diseases. Cardiovascular diseases are a major concern, as witnessed by the impressive list of contributors and the distinguished editorial board for this compact book dealing with